

Library

In the name of A

M. M. Mag.

MEMORIAL
with **OF A** *Leaves*
Christian Life,

Compendiously
Containing all, that a Soul,
Newly converted to GOD,
Ought to do,
That it may Attain to the Perfection,
After which it ought to aspire.

Divided into Seven Books.

Written in Spanish by the R. F. LEWIS DE
GRANADA of the Order of St. Dominick.

Translated anew into English.

THE FIRST PART,
Containing the four first BOOKS,
Which concern the DOCTRINE.

Published by Authority.

L O N D O N :

Printed for *Mat. Turner*, at the Lamb in High-Holborn. 1688.

Christian Life.

Containing all that is necessary
for the Christian to know

and do in order to attain to the Kingdom of Heaven

By the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.

London: Printed by J. O. Smith, in the Strand, 1739.

Price 6d.

For Sale by all the Booksellers in Great Britain.

THE P R E F A C E.

AS the Inclinations and Judgments of Writers have been different, so have they set themselves to treat of different matters. Some, charm'd with the beauty of Eloquence, have labor'd to frame an excellent Orator; they have taken him from the Cradle, and conducted him through all the Steps and Degrees of this Art, till they have brought him to the highest point, to which he could be rais'd. Others have attempted to represent a perfect Prince; others a great Captain; or others a wise Courtier; and in these different Designs every one of them has propos'd to himself the advancing of that, which he most esteem'd. But of all human things there is none so noble, as a perfect *Christian*. This holy Authors name him an heavenly Man; or an earthly Angel; and 'tis with reason, they give him this quality, since being destin'd to a supernatural End, he leads a divine Life. Thus, since all other Conditions, which are as much below this, as their End is inferior, have had

The P R E F A C E.

Masters, who have taught with so much care from their first Elements even to their last Period, what was necessary to render one accomplished in them, how much more just is it to prescribe Rules for this heavenly Profession, which so much the more stands in need of being faithfully taught, as the Perfection of it is more difficult to be attain'd.

This has made me a long time desire, to see in some one Book the manner of framing a perfect *Christian*, to the end that Book might be as it were an Abridgment of what ever belongs to the Conduct of this Life. For as good Work-men take care to furnish themselves with all Instruments, necessary for their Trade, and as those, who apply themselves to any Art or Science, do all, they can, to have some Book, in which they may find, whatever concerns the Knowledge, they would acquire, that they may ease their Memory by inclosing it (as it were) in one only place: so it seems to me very expedient to do the like in the Science of *Christianity*, which is the Art of Arts, and Science of Sciences, to the end such, as desire to serve G O D sincerely, having this little Treasure, may find in it light enough for the Direction of their Lives, and that the Preachers and Confessors, who are zealous for the Publick, may without much pains draw from it whatever is necessary for the infusing of true Piety into the Souls of their Hearers.

The PREFACE.

I know, that we want not at this day Books, which treat of this Matter, but they have all of them in a manner some particular End, to which they are directed, and their Authors would not be oblig'd to treat of every thing in the little room, to which they had confin'd themselves. As for Catechisms, tho' they contain a Summary of *Christianity*, and all that pertains to it; yet since their principal Aim tends only to declare the substance of things, & make them comprehended, their Doctrine is more speculative and fitter to enlighten the Understanding, than to affect the Will.

Wherefore I am resolv'd, by the Grace of G.O.D, and with the Assistance, I hope to receive from the Writings of the holy Fathers, who have spoken of these matters in divers places, to compose this Book, which I pretend to draw from their Sentiments and Sentences, for the framing a perfect *Christian*, conducting him thro' all the States and Exercises of this Life, from the beginning of his Conversion to the utmost Perfection he can acquire. I propose to my self for this purpose to take him quite rough and unrought; like the Trunk of a Tree, cut down upon a barren Mountain, with its Branches, and Bark, and to polish him by little and little, till I have brought him to the perfect Estate, to which he ought to aspire. To this end I will set before his Eyes in my first Book Heaven and Hell, with the Advantages, that accompany
Vertue,

The P R E F A C E.

Vertue, and the Obligations, we have to follow it, and will endeavor to persuade him by these Considerations to take a strong Resolution of leaving Vice, and firmly applying himself to G O D's Service.

This Resolution being form'd, I teach him at first in the second Book, how he must do Penance, because this is the first step, he has to take, that he may enter into this way. I propose to him several Considerations, and divers Prayers, which may serve to make him conceive all possible regret and horror for the sins of his past Life: and I afterwards instruct him, how he must confess himself, and make a satisfaction proportionate to his Offences: After Confession follows Communion; and therefore in my third Book I give him Counsels and Precepts for communicating worthily, with Prayers, which he may use before and after.

Amendment of life ought to be the Fruit of these two Sacraments: on which I enlarge my self in my fourth Book. But because in the *Christian* Life, some content themselves with doing only what is necessary for their Salvation, and others, willing to go farther, and tend to Perfection, are not satisfy'd with a simple Observation of the Commandments, but oblige themselves also to follow the Counsels; I prescribe two Rules of living well, one more common for the one, and another more strict and spiritual for the others:

In fine, because none can either begin a good Life,

The P R E F A C E.

Life, or persevere in it, without the assistance of divine Grace, which is obtain'd by Prayer; after I have given Rules for good Life, I speak of Prayer: and because there are two sorts of it, the one vocal and the other mental, I shew, what it is, in my fifth Book, where I set down the Conditions of a good Prayer, adding several Prayers, which may serve for divers purposes and uses of a *Christian* Life. In my sixth I speak only of Mental Prayer; which principally consists in contemplating the most important Mysteries of JESUS CHRIST's Life, and G O D's Benefits; having already treated more at large of all, that belongs to this Subject, in a Book, I have expressly compos'd concerning Prayer and Meditation. After all these ways, which lead us to G O D, there remains the last and most perfect, which is holy Love and Charity; and of this I treat in the seventh and last Book, where I explain the things, that serve for the gaining this celestial Vertue, and such, as may bring any hindrance to it, and for a Conclusion, I set down the Considerations and Prayers, in which a *Christian* ought to exercise himself, that he may attain to it.

Here is then the Course of the whole *Christian* Life, divided into seven days, into which I have reduc'd all, that this divine Philosophy teaches us. The Doctrine of it is important and necessary; and since the four first Books contain, what ought to be done, and the three following more particularly respect the Exercises

The P R E F A C E.

ercises of Prayer and GOD's Love, which are matters, that should always be in the hands of *Christians*; I have thought fit to divide this Book into two Volumes, to the end that every one may easily carry about him, at all times and in all places, so sweet and necessary a Burthen.

The Book, in which every private person succinctly sets down his principal Affairs, is ordinarily term'd a *Memorial*: I have given the same Name to this, because I have compendiously treated all, I have compris'd in it, tho I have not so much study'd Brevity, but that I have also endeavor'd to set down all, that was necessary for my subject. 'Tis true, the Theme is copious and plentiful, and there are many things to be said, which cannot be sufficiently express'd: but I leave this to other Writers. Yet if it shall please GOD to prolong the Course of this my Life, which passes away with so much speed, I may treat more at large some parts of this Doctrin, and in particular give the Publick an Exhortation, with Rules for good Life, a Treatise of the Love of GOD, and the Life of JESUS CHRIST.

'Tis true, that, what I pretend, is properly a work of the Holy Ghost, and that to him alone belongs the forming of a perfect *Christian*. But as Grace excludes not Labor, which on the contrary ought to concur with it: so GOD's interior Instruction excludes not the exterior Instruction, which comes from men,

but

The P R E F A C E.

but on the contrary necessarily requires it. This Office particularly pertains to the Priests and Ministers of the Church; 'tis to them, that GOD sends us to be inform'd of his Law. Wherefore amongst the Ornaments, with which the High Priest in the old Law was cloth'd, there was one nam'd the *Rational*, that Exod. 21. he wore on his Breast, having engraven in it these words, *Doctrin and Truth*, to shew, that these two things ought to be in *Aaron's* heart, that from thence, as from a plentiful Spring, they might run down upon all the rest. This Function is so important and so considerable, that *Moses* by the Counsel of his Father-in-law *Jethro* reserv'd it to himself alone. This prudent old man advis'd him to commit to o- Exod. 18. ther Judges the lighter Affairs, and the Judgments, that concern'd temporal matters; but that he should reserve to himself Religion and GOD's Worship, and should take for his own Province the care of teaching the People the Ceremonies of the Law, and in what manner they ought to serve GOD. This is, what GOD requires of his Priests; and some of them, whom he had call'd to this Dignity, having been so unhappy, as to neglect the duty of their Charge, he address'd to 'em these amazing words by the mouth of a Prophet: *Because thou* Hof. 4. v. 6. *hast cast away the science and knowledge of my Law, I will also cast away thee, that thou shalt be no more a Priest to me.* And in another place he again threatens them with this punishment;
[a]

The P R E F A C E.

Isai. 29.
v. 14.

ment by the Prophet *Isaiah*, as with the dreadful Calamity, that could befall them, saying: That because of their great sins, he would punish them with a terrible punishment, which should be, that *the Wisdom of their wise men should perish, and the Understanding of their prudent men should be obscur'd.*

After this none can doubt, but that, as the want of this Wisdom is one of the greatest Chastisements, which can be inflicted on such, as have the conduct of Souls: so it is no less terrible to those, who are to receive their Instructions. For the Light of the Understanding being taken away, which is, as it were, the Author of every change, that is made in the Soul, and as the principal Wheel of the Clock, that governs and moves the whole *Christian* Life, what can afterwards be expected, but Blindness, Extravagance, and other Disorders of that nature?

Isai. 27.
v. 11.

Chap. 5.
v. 13.

This Sentiment is none of mine, the whole Scripture shewing us, that all these Evils have no other Source. See here, what Almighty GOD says of them by the mouth of *Isaiah*: *This people is not wise, and therefore he, that created them, will not take pity on them, and he, that formed them, will not pardon them.* And in another place he says: *Therefore was my people led into captivity, because they had no knowledge, and their Nobles died for hunger, and the multitude of them perisht for thirst.* The Prophet *Baruch* confirms the same thing, when he says,

The PREFACE.

says, that the true cause of the Children of *Israels* Captivity, and of their Miseries in strange Lands, was, for that they had forsaken *the Fountain of Wisdom.* He gives also this only Reason for the Destruction of the Giants, that is, of the great men of the world: *Because, says he, they had no knowledge; they perished thro' their Ignorance.* And 'tis to remedy this Evil, that *St. Paul*, writing to the *Colossians*, expressly charges them to take care, that the Word and Doctrin of *JESUS CHRIST* be incessantly preach't amongst 'em, and that they mutually teach, and charitably advertize one another, what they are oblig'd to do.

There is no Trade, how mean soever, but has its Rules for the well performing it: how much more necessary then is it, to have them in the highest of all Exercises, which is to please *GOD*, to serve him, to gain the Kingdom of Heaven, and to surmount the strength and stratagems of our Enemy? How can an ignorant man know a thing, which so much imports him, if there are not set before his Eyes the Promises and Threatnings of Almighty *GOD*, and the Obligations, he has to serve him? How can he conceive a sorrow for his sins; if he is not made to understand the Reasons, he has to be afflicted for them? How can he communicate worthily, if he is not taught, what is necessary for the making a good Communion? How can he regulate his Life, seek Vertue, and shun Vice, if he knows not the

The P R E F A C E.

means to obtain the one, and resist the other, nor understands the Temptations and Artifices of the Enemy? How shall he make a good Prayer, and how can he accompany it with the conditions, it requires, if he has not been instructed in them? How shall he attain to the Love of GOD, if he is ignorant of the way, that leads to it, of the things, that hinder it, and of the Exercises, he must do to merit it? We have need of all this Light for all these different things: we bring it not with us at our Birth; on the contrary we may say with truth, that there is nothing, that better represents our condition, than the Man in the Gospel, who was blind from his Mothers womb.

'Tis indeed the Office of Preachers to cure this Blindness by the Light of GOD's Word; but these are not every where to be found; nor do they all treat of these matters, which are so necessary; nor yet speaking, as they ordinarily do, in general, can they easily descend to such Particularities, as this Moral Doctrin demands, which, respecting particular Exercises, requires also particular Precepts, which are not usually given in Pulpits. Wherefore there is nothing more profitable, than the Reading of good Books. They are as it were dumb Preachers, which teach at all times: how long soever they may be, they are never tiresome, because one may leave them, when one will; and if they are short, one always gets some benefit by frequent reading

The P R E F A C E.

ding them over. How great are the Fruits of GOD's Word! and who shall explain the Doctrine of his Church? 'Tis as a Light, which enlightens our Minds, as a Fire, which heats our Wills, as an Hammer, which softens the hardness of our Hearts, as a Knife, which pares away the superfluities of our Passions, as a Torch, which lights us in all the passages of this Life, as a Seed, which brings forth the Fruits of eternal Life, and in fine as a wholesome Food and Nourishment, which sustains us, refreshes us, and gives strength and vigor to our Souls, for to bring them to GOD.

Experience renders us knowing in this Truth: the Light and Fruit, which come from Reading, are so great, that we ordinarily see, most people change their Lives only by this way: and if many Sinners should be askt, what was the occasion and beginning of their Conversion, they would almost continually answer, that it must be attributed to the Reading of some Book of Devotion, which mov'd them to take that Resolution. Do we not know, how that Officer of the Queen of *Ethiopia* was reading in his Chariot the Prophet *Isaiah*, when GOD converted him by the means of St. *Philip*, who took occasion from that Reading to instruct him in the Faith? And whence proceeded so many heroical Actions, as King *Josias* did during the whole course of his Reign, but from his having read an holy Book, which was sent him by the Priest *Helchias*,

ACT. 8.

The P R E F A C E.

4 Kin. 22. *chias*, as we learn out of the Book of *Kings*?

And to finish with a memorable Example, does not the great St. *Augustin* acknowledge, that he owes his Conversion to a Book, on which he fortunately cast his Eyes: Himself gives us an account of it in the eighth Book of his Confessions; and because 'tis a thing, which deserves for ever to be imprinted in your Minds, I will repeat to you the place at length.

He says then, 'That a certain *African* Gentleman, nam'd *Potitian*, being come to visit him, told him wonderful things, which the World publisht of the great St. *Anthony*: and he added, that the Emperor being one afternoon busied in beholding certain publick Spectacles in the Town of *Triers*, this Gentleman with three of his Friends, who attended the Court, agreed to go walk abroad into the Fields; that two of them came by chance to a Monks Cell, where finding a Book, which contain'd the Life of St. *Anthony*, one of them began to read it, and that feeling his Heart on a sudden inflam'd with holy Love, toucht with a religious shame, and animated with a just Anger against himself, he said these words to his Friend: What do we pretend to obtain by all our Care and Toil? What do we seek? Why have we so many years engag'd our selves in War and Battles? If we should attain to the height of our Desires, can we hope for any better Fortune, than to be esteem'd

The P R E F A C E.

‘steem’d by the Emperor? And in that very
‘Estate what is there, that is not frail and ex-
‘pos’d to dangers? And thro’ how many Pe-
‘rils must we run to arrive at this extream
‘Peril? In the mean time if I desire to be
‘lov’d by my GOD, I may immediatly be so.
‘He spake these words, being troubled and a-
‘gitated with the Labor, which the bringing
‘forth of the new Life gave him; he cast his
‘Eyes again on the Book, he read, he was in-
‘wardly chang’d, and entirely freed from all
‘worldly Affections, as appear’d soon after.
‘For having finish’d his Reading, and allay’d the
‘storm, which the waves of his Thoughts had
‘stirr’d up in his Heart, with a great sigh he
‘said to his Friends: I am now in Peace and
‘Repose: I heartily renounce all our Hopes: I
‘am absolutely resolv’d to serve GOD, and
‘from this very moment I set up my rest here,
‘without going any farther. If you will not
‘imitate me in my Resolution, at least endea-
‘vor not to withdraw me from it. The other
‘answer’d, that he would not leave him, and
‘that he should not find any difficulty in keep-
‘ing him company, since so great a Recom-
‘pence was propos’d to them: Thus both of
‘them began without sparing any thing to
‘raise that spiritual Building, of which the Go-
‘spel speaks. And what is no less worthy of
‘admiration, is, that they were both betroth’d,
‘and that those, to whom they were promis’d,
‘understanding this Change, consecrated their
‘Virginity to GOD. [a 4] This

The PREFACE.

Conf. C. I.
8.

C. 8. v. 12.

Mat. 19.

This is, what St. *Augustin* relates, and this Example wrought so powerfully on his Soul, that turning instantly towards one of his Friends, he said to him with a loud voice : What is't, we do ? What have we so lately heard ? The unlearned come, and carry Heaven by force, and we with all our Learning remain bury'd in Flesh and Bloud. The Saint adds, that sensibly toucht with this Thought, he went into a Garden, where he lay down on the ground under a Fig-tree, and that giving liberty to his Tears, in the trouble and agitation, to which his Heart was reduc'd, he utter'd these words : How long, O Lord, how long wilt thou be angry ? Shall thy just Indignation never cease ? Forget, I beseech thee, my past Iniquities. And immediatly he began again anew this discourse : How long, how long ? To morrow, and to morrow ? And why shall not at this very moment an end be put to my Crimes ? Whilst in the bitterness of his heart he breath'd forth these sorrowful words, he heard a voice, which said to him ; Take and read. He immediatly rose up, and took into his hand a Book of the holy Scripture, that lay near him, calling to mind, what he had heard spoken of St. *Anthony*, how that hearing by chance in the Gospel these words of JESUS CHRIST, *Go, sell all, that thou hast, and give to the Poor, and thou shalt have Treasure in heaven, and come, and follow me* ; he took them, as if they had been

The P R E F A C E.

been particularly address'd to himself, and thereupon resolv'd to leave all, and follow JESUS CHRIST. Animated by this Example, and yet more by the Voice, he had heard, he began to read the Book, and immediatly Almighty GOD infus'd so great a Light into his Heart, that joyfully renouncing all present things, he gave himself up wholly to GOD's service.

We learn by these Examples, how many signal Conversions have had their beginning from the Reading of good Books: as that of *Potitianus's* Friends, of *St. Augustin*, and also that of *St. Anthony*; and we might adde many others, as well of past Ages, as of this, in which we live, that began all after the same manner. But this perhaps would be superfluous: for the Mysteries, which the *Christian* Religion reveals to men, have so much Beauty to touch their Hearts, that I wonder not at their producing such marvellous changes in the Souls of those, who consider them. The reading of holy Books not only serves to awaken those, whom this World holds as it were enchanted and lull'd asleep; but also to preserve those, whom Grace has already rous'd, and who begin to watch over themselves. Wherefore GOD's Word is in the Scripture term'd Bread, or Food, because it nourishes and sustains Souls in the Spiritual Life, as material Bread does Bodies in the corporal.

And

The P R E F A C E.

And altho this sort of Food has in all times been as necessary, as Bread for the preservation of Life, yet is it much more so in this. Heretofore the Pastors and Priests were so careful and zealous in preaching G O D's Word, that there was no need of any thing more for Believers, who might without reading preserve themselves and go forward in Vertue; but we see at this day, that many of those, to whom the Care of Souls is intrusted, content themselves with administering the Sacraments, and saying a Mass at the usual hour, and that in the greatest part of the Boroughs and Villages, and even in some good Towns, having perform'd these Functions, they think they have satisfy'd their Duty. Thus are the People depriv'd of an assistance, which is so necessary to them; and in this necessity 'tis fit to supply with good Books the want of knowing and zealous Pastors.

Receive then this Present, that I make you, which in an indifferent bulk and at a small charge may supply the Instructions, you would otherwise want. 'Twill serve for a Sermon, to exhort you to live well; for a *Christian* Instruction, to teach you true Piety; for a Formulary of a good Confession; for a Preparation, to communicate worthily; for a Book of Devotion, to pray by; and will in fine furnish you with several subjects to meditate on, which are in a manner all the Duties, that the *Christian* Philosophy comprehends:

The P R E F A C E.

hends : for if this Work of mine is worthy of any Consideration, 'tis because it contains many things, and treats of whatsoever concerns the Obligations of *Christians*, as well of those, that are but Beginners, as of those, that are more advanc'd in Vertue. I have done, what I could, to collect all these matters together, and express them in a plain and easy stile, to the end I might please even the Palat of the Weak, to whom I often direct my discourse. Now if the benefit, that may be reap'd by it, be as great, as the diligence, I have bestow'd on it, has been painful, I shall think my Pains happily employ'd : since there is no bodily Labor, how great soever it may be, which ought to enter into comparison with the least spiritual Good, that may contribute to the Salvation of Souls.

A
TABLE of the CHAPTERS
 IN
This First Volume.

THE FIRST BOOK.
 Containing a serious Exhortation to
 Good Life.

Chap. 1.	W <i>ith what Punishments G O D threatens those, who live ill.</i>	Page 1
Chap. 2.	<i>What the Glory of the Blessed is.</i>	20
Chap. 3.	<i>The Advantages, G O D promises the Good in this Life.</i>	28
Chap. 4.	<i>That a Man never ought to delay his Conversion, having so many Debts to discharge, incurr'd by the Faults of his past Life.</i>	34
Chap. 5.	<i>Conclusion.</i>	39

THE SECOND BOOK.
 Of Penance and Confession. 46

Chap. 1.	O <i>f the first part of Penance, which is Contrition, and the Means to obtain it.</i>	48
Chap. 2.	<i>Of the principal Means to obtain Contrition,</i>	

A Table of the Chapters.

<i>trition, and particularly of true Sorrow for Sin.</i>	56
Chap. 3. <i>Considerations, that may help a Penitent to conceive an horror of his Sins. First of their Multitude.</i>	
§. 2. <i>Second Consideration. Of what is lost by Sin.</i>	64
§. 3. <i>Third Consideration. Of the Majesty and Goodness of GOD, against whom we sin.</i>	67
§. 4. <i>Fourth Consideration. Of the Injury, done to GOD by Sin.</i>	70
§. 5. <i>Fifth Consideration. Of the Hatred, GOD bears to Sin.</i>	71
§. 6. <i>Sixth Consideration. Of Death and the things that follow it.</i>	74
§. 7. <i>Seventh Consideration. Of GOD's Benefits.</i>	75
Chap. 4. <i>A Prayer, to stir up in the Soul Compunction, and Sorrow for her Sins.</i>	77
Chap. 5. <i>Another Prayer, to beg Pardon for our Sins.</i>	80
Chap. 6. <i>Of the wonderful Fruits, that follow true Contrition.</i>	94
Chap. 7. <i>Of the second Part of Penance, which is Confession, and of seven things, that are to be observ'd in it.</i>	101
§. 1. <i>Of the Care, that is to be taken in examining our Conscience.</i>	ibid.
§. 2. <i>The Obligation, we have to confess the Number of our Sins.</i>	103
§. 3. <i>Of Confession, and the Circumstances, that ought to accompany it.</i>	104
§. 4.	

A Table of the Chapters.

§. 4. That 'tis not necessary to confess any thing, but the kind of the Sin, of which we accuse our selves,	107
§. 5. In what manner Sins of Thought are to be confess'd.	109
§. 6. Of taking heed not to prejudice our Neighbors Reputation.	112
§. 7. Of the Care to be taken in chusing a good Confessor.	ibid.
Chap. 8. Of Cases, in which the Confession is null, and must be reiterated.	113
A Method to make a good Confession of ones Sins.	115
General Directions for distinguishing between Mortal and Venial Sin.	135
Chap. 9. Of the third Part of Penance, which is Satisfaction.	137
Chap. 10. Of the Original and Cause of Satisfaction.	141
Chap. 11. Of the three principal Works, by which we satisfy GOD.	154
§. 1. Of the first Satisfactory Work, which is Fasting.	155
§. 2. Of the second, which is Alms.	157
§. 3. Of the third, which is Prayer.	161
Chap. 12. A short Method of Confession for those, that confess often.	165

THE THIRD BOOK.

Of Holy Communion.

Chap. I. H OW we ought to prepare our selves for it.	173
Chap.	

A Table of the Chapters.

Chap. 2. Of the first thing, necessary to communicating well, which is purity of Conscience.	179
Chap. 3. Of the second thing, necessary to communicating well, which is purity of Intention.	184
Chap. 4. Of the third thing, necessary to communicating well, which is actual Devotion.	188
Chap. 5. That time ought to be taken for the putting ones self in all these Dispositions.	203
Chap. 6. What ought to be done before communicating.	209
Chap. 7. What is to be done in communicating, and after Communion.	213
Chap. 8. Of the Use of the Sacraments, and the Profit, receiv'd by often frequenting them.	221
§. 1. Of the Effects of Sacramental Communion.	224
§. 2. Answers to the Objections of the Slothful.	228
Chap. 9. Of the Cause, why some Persons find little Devotion, when they celebrate or communicate.	237
Chap. 10. Whether it be good to communicate very often.	241
A Meditation before holy Communion, to stir up in the Soul the Fear and Love of the most holy Sacrament.	252
The second Part of this Meditation.	256
A Prayer after Communion, made by St. Thomas	mas

A Table of the Chapters.

mas of Aquin.	260
<i>A Meditation after the Communion.</i>	261
<i>A Meditation for one to exercise himself in on the day of holy Communion, in considering the Greatness of this Mystery, and giving Thanks to our Lord for this incomparable Benefit.</i>	265
<i>The second Part of this Meditation.</i>	270

THE FOURTH BOOK.

Containing two principal Rules of a *Christian*
Life.

Chap. 1. T <i>HE first Rule of a Christian Life, treating of the Victory over Sin, and the Means to destroy it.</i>	279
Chap. 2. <i>Of the Temptations, that most ordina- rily befall those, who begin to serve G O D; principally in Monasteries.</i>	312
Chap. 3. <i>The second Rule of a Christian Life, which is the Imitation of JESUS CHRIST, for Persons, more advanc'd in Vertue.</i>	321
Chap. 4. <i>Of the Exercise and Use of Vertues.</i>	327
Chap. 5. <i>Of a Christians most essential Obli- gations towards G O D, towards himself, and towards his Neighbor.</i>	356
Chap. 6. <i>Twelve principal things, which they ought to do, who desire to serve Almighty G O D.</i>	368
Chap. 7. <i>Twelve sorts of Defects, which ought carefully to be avoided in the Spiritual Life.</i>	372

THE

THE
MEMORIAL
OF A
Christian Life.

The First BOOK.

Containing a
Serious Exhortation to Good Life.

CHAP. I.

*With what Punishments GOD threatens those
who live ill.*

OF the Means, GOD has often us'd
to subdue the Hearts of men, and
render them obedient to his Com-
mands, one of the most prevalent
has ever been to set before their
Eyes the greatness of the Pains prepar'd for those,
who audaciously disobey, and break his Laws:
For tho' the hopes of the Happiness, promis'd
the Good, may sometimes produce the same Ef-
fect,

fect, yet are we usually more sensibly touch'd with what afflicts, than with what rejoyces us. We are more discontented at an Affront, than delighted with Honour; and the Inconveniences of Sickneſs are more diſtaſtful to us, than the Sweetneſs of Health is pleaſant; ſo that the Eſteem, we have for the Latter, ariſes from the former, the Evil which accompanies it, making a deeper impreſſion on our Senſes.

Wherefore we ſee, that in former Ages GOD more commonly uſ'd this Remedy, as we are taught by the Prophets, whoſe Writings are fill'd with nothing but Terrours and Threats. GOD's deſign without doubt was this way to ſtrike a dread into mens Minds, to keep their haughty Spirits within the bounds of their Duties, and by this fear, to bring them under, and ſubject them to the Yoke of his Law. In *Jeremy* GOD commands that Prophet to take a white Book, and to write in it all the Threats, and Calamities, he had reveal'd from the time, he firſt began to ſpeak to him, and to read them to the People, to ſee, whether the representation of theſe Miſeries would oblige them to change their Lives, to the end GOD might change the Reſolution, he had taken, to make them feel the Effects of his Wrath. The Prophet did, as he was commanded; and the Scripture obſerves, that at the ſame time this People was ſurpriz'd with ſo great an Aſtoniſhment, that having loſt the uſe of their Senſes, there was left them only the motion of their Eyes, which they ſorrowfully caſt on one another; ſo great a Terrour did theſe divine Words cauſe in them.

'Tis manifeſt then, that in the time of the Moſaical Law this was one of the principal Means, which

which GOD us'd with men, nor is it abolish'd in the Law of Grace. Does not St. Paul, the greatest of Preachers, say, That as God makes known his Justice in those he renders just, he in like manner causes his Indignation to appear in the punishment of the wicked? When the Fore-runner of JESUS CHRIST was sent, we know, in what manner he first preach'd. He declar'd aloud, That the Ax was now put to the root of the Tree. That every Tree that yielded not good fruit, should be cut down, and cast into the fire. That a mightier than he was already come into the world. That his Pan was in his hand, to winnow and purge his Floor; that he would gather the Wheat into his Barn, but the Chaff he would burn with unquenchable fire. The dread, which the thunder of these words caus'd in their Hearts, was such, that all sorts of People, and all sorts of Spirits ran to him. Even the Publicans and Souldiers, who ordinarily take little care of their Salvation, had recourse to this holy man, asking him, what they should do to be sav'd, and avoid these Menaces. We now declare to you the same thing on GOD's behalf. 'Tis not, I confess, with the same Spirit, and the same Holiness, with which St. John Baptist accompany'd his words; but you are assur'd, that we speak to you with as much truth, since Saint John preach'd not any other Faith, or any other Gospel, but what we now shew forth to you.

§. I.

You will perhaps ask me, what the Pains are, with which GOD threatens the wicked in the Scripture. My Answer is in few words, that what may be said without making any long discourse,

is this: That as the Reward of the Good is an universal Good, in which is to be found whatever is good; so the Punishment of the Wicked is an universal Evil, containing in it self all other Evils.

To understand this, you must know, that all the Evils of this present Life are particular Evils, and consequently afflict not all our Senses together. Amongst Diseases, some attack the Eyes, others the Ears, others the Heart, the Stomach, the Head, or some other part. Not any one of these Evils extends it self generally over all our Members. They have their seat only in some one of them: and yet we see, what torment any one of these Infirmities (tho but the Aking of a Tooth) gives a Sick man.

This is the Effect, ordinarily produc'd by Sickness, which (how troublesom soever) is nevertheless supportable; but if a man should fall into so universal a Distemper, that it should not leave any one of his Senses, or any one of his Members without its particular pain; that at the same time he should feel sharp pains in his Head, in his Eyes, in his Stomach, in his Heart, and in all the parts and joynts of his Body; that in this condition he should lie stretch'd on a Bed, wasting away by little and little in his Sufferings, every Member having as it were its particular Executioner; What would you say of the Torment, he should endure? Could you imagine any thing more miserable, or more worthy of compassion? Would you not pity even a Dog, you should see reduc'd to such a state? Behold here (if this matter will admit of any comparison) what, not for one night alone, but for all Eternity, is suffer'd in Hell! As the Wicked have employ'd

all their Members and all their Senses to offend GOD, and as there is nothing in them, which they have not made instrumental to sin; so 'tis very just, that every one of these parts should receive its proper punishment. In this place the unchast Eyes shall be tormented with the horrible sight of Devils; the Ears with the confusion of the Cries and Groans, they shall there hear; the Smell with the insupportable stink of that infamous Abode; the Taste with a furious Hunger and Thirst; the Touch and all the Members, capable of that sentiment, with unexpressible Fire and Cold both together; the Imagination shall be tormented by the rigour of present Evils; the Memory by the remembrance of past Pleasures; the Understanding by the consideration of lost Benefits, and future Miseries.

The Scripture admirably well sets forth the Diversity and great Number of these Pains, when it says, That in Hell they shall suffer Hunger and Thirst, that there shall be Weeping, Gnashing of Teeth, two-edg'd Swords, and Spirits created for Revenge; that there shall be Serpents, Worms, Scorpions, Hammers, Wormwood, Water mingled with Gall, Winds and horrible Tempests, and other things of that sort; all which signify the infinity and dreadful severity of the Punishments, inflicted in that place. In that place shall be found also interior and exterior Darkness, environing both the Body and Soul, much more obscure than that of Egypt, which might be even felt with the hand. In fine, there shall be a Fire, not of the same nature with that in this World, which offends but slightly, and in a short time ceases; but a Fire, fit for that place, which shall cause incredible Torments, and never have end. Now if

Mat. 22.
Luke 16.
Eccles. 7.
Isa. ult.
Apoc. 18.

Exod. 10.

this be true, can there be any thing imagin'd more strange, than to see those, who believe and confess these things, to live in so horrible a negligence. To what Labors would not a rational man expose himself, that he might but one only day, nay but one only hour, be exempted from so many Evils; and yet scarce any one thinks on the eternal Miseries; scarce any one has the courage to expose himself to the least trouble, that he may escape them by embracing Vertue. This Blindness is certainly so prodigious, that 'tis sufficient to deprive all those, that consider it, of their Reason.

If in the multitude of these pains, they could but in the least hope, that they would one day come to an end, or after some time be diminish'd, it would be some comfort; but on the contrary, the Gate is there shut against all sorts of Hope whatever. In the Miseries of this World there is always a Gap remaining open, where those, that suffer, expect some Consolation. They are sometimes comforted by Reason, sometimes by Friends, sometimes by the knowledge, that several others undergo the same Calamities with them, and in fine by the Belief, that these Afflictions will not last for ever: But this last of all Evils is the only one without any Consolation; the Reprobates see no door, where they can find any safety: Neither Heaven, Earth, the Time past, present, or future, nor all other things whatever, offer them the least Remedy; which way soever they turn, they find themselves to be the Mark of all the Arrows of GOD's Wrath. All Creatures seem to have conspir'd against them, and they are themselves their own most cruel Enemies.

This is the State, that these unhappy ones bewail in the Prophet, saying, *The sorrows of death have*

have compassed me: and the perils of hell have found me; because which way soever they turn their Eyes, they see only subjects of sorrow, and find nothing to comfort them. The Virgins, that were ready, says the Gospel, entred into the Palace of the Bridegroom, and presently the Gate was shut. The Gate shut! O eternal shutting! O Gate of all Goodness, which shalt never be open'd again, who can sufficiently consider thee? As if the Gospel had more clearly said, The Gate is shut for ever to Pardon, to Mercy, to Hope, to Grace, to Merits, and in fine to whatsoever good can be expected. There are only six days, that Manna can be gather'd in, on the seventh, which is the Sabbath, 'tis no longer to be found: He therefore shall fast for ever, who has not made provision, while it was time. Because of cold, says the Wise man, the slothful could not plow: he shall beg therefore in the Summer, and it shall not be given him. And in another place, He that gathereth in the harvest, is a wise Son: but he that snorteth in the Summer, is the Son of Confusion. And in effect, can there be imagin'd any Confusion more strange, than that of the unhappy Miser, who might have bought all the Treasures of Heaven with the least crumbs of Bread, which fell from his Table; but having refus'd so small thing to a poor Begger, is now in punishment of his Avarice become himself so poor, that he asks and shall for ever ask one drop of Water, without being able to obtain it? Who would not be touch'd with the Prayer he made? Father Abraham, says he, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his Finger into water for to cool my Tongue, because I am tormented in this flame. Can one desire less? He durst not ask a Glass of Water, nor that

Psal. 114.
v. 3.Mit. 25.
v. 10.Exo. 16.
v. 26.Prov. 20.
v. 4.Chap. 10.
v. 3.Luk. 16.
v. 24.

Lazarus should put his hand into the water, nor yet so much as his whole finger; he requests only, that he touch his Tongue with the tip of his finger, and this is deny'd him.

This is to teach us, that this Gate is so shut, that there is not the least hope of comfort for the wicked; and that this horrible Excommunication, fulminated against them, is so general, that they cannot expect so little a Refreshment. On what side soever they turn their Eyes, which way soever they stretch forth their Hands, they will find nothing to ease them; their Condition is like to that of a drowning man; being bury'd in the midst of the Waves, and not knowing where to set his foot, he reaches forth his hands on every side, because all he touches, is but running water, which deceives and deludes him. Thus these Victims, immolated to the just vengeance of Heaven, swallow'd up in a deep Ocean of Miseries, shall be reduc'd to a continual combat and struggling against Death, without finding any Consolation, on which they may rest.

Behold then one of the greatest Torments, that is suffer'd in this Abode: for if these pains had any limited time, tho' it should extend to a thousand, or even an hundred millions of years, this would be at least some sort of comfort, since whatever has an end, is not absolutely great. But the state of the Damned is not of this nature; their punishments are link'd with GOD's Eternity, the continuance of their Miseries equals the duration of GOD's Glory, as long as GOD shall live, they shall dy, nor shall they cease to be, what they are, till GOD also ceases to be, what he is. O dying Life! O immortal Death! How shall I name thee? Shall I call thee Life or Death? If thou

thou art Life, how dost thou kill? If thou art Death, how canst thou endure? I will term thee neither the one nor the other, because both in the one and the other there is some good; in Life there is some Rest, in Death there is an End, which is a great ease to our Afflictions: but there being in thee neither Rest nor End, what canst thou be? Thou art all, that is bad both in Life and Death: for thou hast the Torments of Death, and not the End, which it gives; thou hast the continuance of Life, and not the Refreshments, it brings. GOD has stript Life and Death of all the Good, they had, and plac'd in thee, whatever they had of Evil, for the punishment of the Wicked. How bitter is this Composition! how ^{Psalm 74.} loathsome and intolerable is this Drink of our ^{v. 10.} Lords Cup, of which all the Sinners of the Earth shall drink.

I could wish then, that you would attentively consider this long duration, that you would penetrate as far, as you can, into this Eternity with the Eyes of your Understanding, and that like a pure and clean Beast, chewing the Cud, you ^{Levit. 22.} would ruminate on this point as much as it ^{v. 3.} deserves. And to facilitate to you this Meditation by an easie Comparison: Imagin, how great the pain of a sick man is in one bad night, especially if he be vext with any sharp Distemper. See, how often he turns him in his Bed, what disquiet he finds in himself, how long the time seems to him, how he counts all the hours, how slowly he thinks, they pass, and with what impatience he desires the Day, which is yet so little capable to cure his Disease. If the Labor of one only Night appears so painful, what will be the Torments of an Eternal Night, which has not any Morning, nor expects
the

the least dawning of the Day? O profound Darkness! O Eternal Night, how terrible thou art! Night curs'd by the Mouth of GOD, and his Saints! Which desirest Light, and shalt never see it; which wishest for the brightness of the Morning, and shalt never enjoy it! But weigh a little more, what an horrible Torment it will be to live eternally in such a Night, not laid on a good Bed, as sick men are, but on a Bed, or rather in a Furnace of burning Flames. What Body will be able to support these Heats? How the very thoughts of them makes me to tremble? If it be an insupportable pain to hold the end of the Finger on a burning Coal for a short space of time, what will it be to burn both Body and Soul in the midst of these Flames, whose heat is so sharp and penetrating, that those of this World are in comparision of them but painted Fires? Is there yet any Judgment on the Earth? Have men yet any Reason? Do they understand, what these words mean? Do they think them to be only Fables and Amusements, or that these things concern not them, but that they are spoken for others? A Christian can alledge none of all this, since his Faith assures him the contrary.

§. 2.

To this Evil, which is already so great, succeeds another, not one jot less, to wit, that these pains are always alike, always in the same degree, and the same rigour, without receiving any diminution or abatement. All things under Heaven turn round with Heaven, they never continue in the same station, they are always ascending, or descending. The Sea ebbs and flows, Rivers

vers increase and decrease; Times and Seasons, the Fortune of all Men, even of Kings themselves, are in continual motion: there is no Fever, how violent soever, but has its intermissions. There is no Pain so sharp, but when it is come to the utmost extremity, it abates. In fine, Time by little and little wears away all Evils: and as 'tis commonly said, there is nothing sooner dry'd up than Tears. This Pain alone is always fresh, this Fever has no Interval, these Fits have neither Evening nor Morning. GOD in the time of the Deluge caus'd it to rain forty days and forty nights without ceasing, and the World was drown'd: but he will eternally rain the Darts and Arrows of his Wrath upon the Damn'd; without one moments intermission.

This is so true, that (according to the Opinion of St. Thomas) the pains, which shall be suffer'd in Hell for venial sins, shall be of as long continuance, as those which shall be inflict'd for mortal sins. For though venial sin merits not an infinite punishment; yet because in that place all Debts are rigorously exacted, there being no remission of any, this torment shall continue always in one and the same Degree, and one eternal Duration. See now, whether any state can be more intolerable than continually to suffer in the same manner, and without any alteration or change: Should a Dish be never so delicate, yet if we were oblig'd to eat of it all our Life, it would cause in us a disgust. The *Manna*, which GOD sent the Children of Israel in the Desert, was so excellent a Food, that nothing can be imagin'd better; yet after the people had often eaten of it, it grew so loathsome to them, that they could no longer endure it. A strait and direct way

Gen. 7. v. 10.

I. 2. q. 87.
art. 9. ad 3.

Gen. 7. v. 10.

Exod. 16.

Num. 21. v. 4.

way is more tiresome than that, which turns and winds: for variety, even in difficult matters, has I know not what of content. Consider now, if things, that are pleasing, cause a loathing in us, when they are frequent, what a vexation and discontent such terrible pains will give us, continuing always the same. What will be the thoughts of these unhappy Wretches, when they shall see themselves so forsaken, and so hated by GOD, that he will never discharge them of the punishment of one venial sin? The Rage and Fury, they shall enter into, will be so great, that they will never cease cursing and blaspheming his Holy Name.

§. 3.

To these Evils you may adde a new pain, which incessantly consumes and devours the Damn'd: tis the Worm of Conscience, of which the Holy Scripture so often speaks, saying, *Their worm shall never dy, and their fire shall never be quenched.* This Worm is a raging Despight, which possesses those Wretches, and an unfruitful Repentance, which shall always torment them, by putting them in mind of the time, that was given them, and of the means, that were offered them to escape this miserable Condition, which they unhappily neglected. With what motions of Fury will not Sinners be agitated, when they shall see themselves in this desolate state, without help, and without hope, and shall remember, how many days and years they have let unprofitably pass away? How often were they advertisd of the Danger, that threatened them, and how little did they regard it? Do we not read in the Gospel, *That there shall be*
in

Mat. 8. v. 12.
L. 22. v. 13.

in that place *Weeping, and Gnashing of Teeth?*

These are, Brethren, some of the principal Causes of the Torment, that is in Hell; and to the end you may the better comprehend a thing, which is of so great importance to you, I will set before your eyes an Example, which very much represents the pains of the Damned. Remember the History of *Joseph*, and the Action, he did in the time of the *Egyptian* Famine. During seven years Gen. 41.v.49 GOD sent so extraordinary an abundance of Wheat, that it exceeded all measure, and equall'd the very sand of the Sea. The seven years of Plenty being ended, the other seven, which follow'd them, were afflicted with so great and so universal a scarcity, that the very first year all *Egypt* came to *Pharaoh*, saying, Give us food: The King sent them to *Joseph*, who requir'd of them all the Money they had, and gave them Corn for a year. Having spent their Provision, they return'd Ch. 47.v. 15. the next year to *Joseph*, and said to him, *Give us Bread*: Why will you suffer us to dy for hunger in your presence, since you know we have no more money? *Joseph* answered them, Bring me all your Cattel, and I will give you Corn: This was done. The next year after, finding themselves in the same extremity, they had again recourse to *Joseph* with these words: You know well, my Lord, that we have no more Money or Cattel, to give you for the preservation of our lives, and that we have now nothing left but our Bodies and useless Lands. Will you suffer us to perish before you, for want of Bread? Our Lands and our Bodies are yours: Receive us to serve the King in the condition of Slaves, and give us at least wherewith to sow the Land, lest the Realm become a Desert, by the loss of all those that were wont to till it. Thus *Joseph* became Master of all *Egypt*

Egypt by taking advantage of the Peoples Inconsiderateness.

Let us see now the profit, you may draw from this History, and do you imagin with me, what were the thoughts of the *Egyptians*, when they remembred those happy years of plenty, and consider'd, that they had not only a favorable opportunity to provide for their future necessities, but also to enrich themselves for their whole lives. Represent to your self their vain Repentance, and with what displeasure they made themselves these Reproaches: Miserable that we are, with what ease might we not only have remedy'd the necessity of a year, but have also procur'd our selves abundance for ever, and we would not! Had we not been forewarn'd, our negligence might have been in some sort excusable; but our misfortune was foretold us long, before it hapned. We might easily judge, that he who had spoken the truth of the things, that were past, would not prove a Liar in those, that were to come. We saw, with what earnestness and care our Kings Officers gather'd together all the Corn of the Province; which ought to have taken away all doubt out of our minds. And after this, we let our selves be surpriz'd: Can such neglect and inconsiderateness be any way excus'd? What advantage might we not have receiv'd from the Goods, we might then have stor'd up, had we not prodigally wast'd them? What Riches might we not have gotten, by what we spent and squander'd away unprofitably? Where was our Wit? Where was our Reason, that we could not benefit our selves by so advantageous a Coniuncture? These Complaints would without doubt have been very just in the mouth of these Wretches: But there is as little proportion between their misfortune and that, of which

which we speak, between their Blindness and that of the greatest part of men, as there is between the shadow and the truth. The Hunger they suffer'd, lasted but seven years; but this of Hell shall be eternal: that found a Remedy, tho' it cost them very dear; this shall never have any: There was a means found to redeem that with Money and some Land; but this can never be redeem'd or compensated: Of this punishment there is no Remission, from this Tribunal there is no Appeal, this Decree is not to be revok'd. After the seven years were past, that People began to come forth of their misery; but in this, we represent to you, whoever shall have begun to suffer, shall suffer eternally, and never know what Rest or Ease means.

If the Sorrow and Complaints of the *Egyptians* were, during that time, so great and so just; what shall be the affliction of these, when they shall see themselves without Remedy? when tearing themselves, and pining away with Grief, they shall say, Wretch that I am, what time and what opportunities have I suffer'd to pass away in vain? I saw the Season, in which for one Glass of cold Water I might have gain'd a Crown of Glory, when by giving something to the Poor, I might have merited Eternal Life. What hinder'd me from casting my Eyes upon the future? How did the present blind me? Why did I let the years pass away unprofitably, which by their abundance gave me means of being rich? Had I liv'd amongst Heathens, and believ'd, that all was ended with the present Life, I might have had some excuse before my Judge, and said to him, I knew not, what you had reserv'd for me in the other Life: But living among Christians, having the happiness to be of their number, know-
ing

ing by Faith, that this Hour must come, the Voice of the Church continually advertising me of it, seeing every day so many people, who, to benefit by her Advice, made use of their time; whose life was an invincible proof of what was taught us, and who hastened to make great provision of good works for this last hour. I see no excuse for me, nothing can justify my having continued deaf to so many Voices, and blind to so many Examples; Heaven was offered me for nothing, and there is no Torment, but I deserve for having so far forgotten my self. Infernal Furies, gnaw and tear my Intraills, I have merited it: I deserve to be tormented with Hunger for ever, since I would not in time provide my self of what was necessary. I deserve not to reap, since I have not sown; I deserve to have nothing, since I stor'd up nothing; let not any thing now be given me, of what I desire, since I heretofore refus'd, what was so easy for me to give: I deserve eternally to let forth Cries, and shed Tears in vain: As long as GOD shall be GOD, do I deserve, that the Worm of my Conscience should gnaw and devour me for ever, since for a little Wealth, which I enjoy'd, I have lost infinite Treasures, when that by depriving my self of so small a matter, I might have gain'd so great Riches. Behold, what is that Worm, which shall never dy! Behold, in what manner it torments the Damn'd, and makes one of their greatest Punishments.

§. 4.

I assure my self, you will not be a little terrify'd at so many sorts of Pains, and that you will believe

lieve, there can be nothing added to those of which I have spoken ; but GOD's Arm is strong enough to chastise his Enemies yet more rigorously : These sufferings, I have represented, are great, but he can easily make them feel new ones : those, we have observ'd, are common to all the Damn'd ; but there are particular ones, which every one shall suffer according to his Crime. The Proud shall be abas'd, and fill'd with Confusion ; the Covetous shall be driven to extream Poverty ; the Gluttons shall be tormented with perpetual Thirst, and raging Hunger ; the Unchast shall burn in the Flames, which themselves have kindled ; and all those, who have employ'd their Lives only to invent new Pleasures, shall live in continual Tears. But because there is ordinarily nothing that more powerfully touches, than Examples, I will alledge to you only one, to make you comprehend something of this Truth. We read of a certain Saint, to whom G O D granted the favour to see in Spirit the punishment of a carnal man, who, during his life, had abandon'd himself to all sorts of infamous Pleasures. He saw, as soon as this unhappy person was expir'd, the Devils seize upon his Soul, and with great joy present it to the Prince of Darknes, who was sitting in a Chair of Fire. Seeing before him this Criminal, he rose up from his Seat, and said, he would surrender to him that honourable place, because he had been of Quality in the World, and always treated with Respect. As soon as he was late, and had with terrible Cries and Groans a thousand times curs'd an Honor, that cost him so dear, two horrible Devils presented him a Cup of a most stinking and bitter Drink, which they forc'd him to drink, saying, 'Tis fit you tast the Wine which

C

we

we drink here below, since on Earth you desir'd delicious Wines, and dainty Cheer. At the same time came in two other Devils with two Trumpets of Fire, which setting to the Ears of this man, they blew into them on both sides burning Flames, mocking at his Misery with these words: We have prepar'd for you this Refreshment, because we knew you lov'd the delicacy of Musick. Two others follow'd, loaded with Serpents and Vipers, which throwing into his bosom, and on his belly, they said, Since you were enamour'd of the Kisses and Embraces of Women, 'tis reasonable, you should now feel other Caresses, and make proof of other Delights.

Isa. 27.

'Tis thus, that in this place for the punishment of the Wicked, as the Prophet speaks, *Measure is oppos'd to measure*, to the end that by the diversity of the pains, proportion'd to the Crimes, the Order of GOD's Justice and Wisdom may appear with greater lustre. And GOD shew'd something of it in Spirit to this holy man, to the end we might not be surpriz'd, but might prevent these Evils by voluntary Chastisements. 'Tis not, that these things are materially found in Hell, but GOD makes use of them to let us in some manner understand the torments, that are there suffered, and the sorrows, that accompany the Damn'd. There is none, not the very Heathens themselves, but have had some light into this matter. For one of their Poets, having begun to relate some of the Infernal Torments, passes over the rest in silence because of their multitude, declaring, that tho' he had an hundred Mouths, as many Tongues, and a Voice of Iron, yet should he not be able to recite so much as their Names. 'Tis a Poet, that speaks; but we may truly say, that

Virg. Æn.
lib. 6.

that he spake in this place like a Prophet, or an Evangelist.

If then these things are certain, and not to be avoided by the Wicked, who is he, that, looking on these things with the Eyes of Faith, can, without renouncing his Reason, and even the sentiments of Self-love, which always seeks its own good, and is ever fearful of evil, forbear to change his Life? To act otherwise, would be indeed to be reduc'd to the condition of Beasts, who look no further, than what is before them; 'twould be to have Eyes, and not to see. *Hear, Iſa. 42. v. 18, 19.* *ye deaf, says Iſaiab, and you that are blind, open your eyes, and see. Who is blind, but my servant? and deaf, but he to whom I have sent my Messengers? Who is truly without eyes, but he, that has suffer'd himself to be sold for a slave?* People of the World, who brag, that they are so prudent, and see so many things, do they not see this? Do they, which have such good Ears, and hear every thing, continue deaf only on this occasion? If you believe not what I say to you, you are no Christians; and if you believe it, and have not recourse to Remedies, you are irrational. A Philosopher has said, that there is this difference between Opinion and Imagination; that Imagination alone is not sufficient to cause a fear, but there must be Opinion, to work this effect: For the Imagination alone, I have, that an house may fall upon me, will not put me in fear, unless my Thought at the same time represents, that this Accident will happen. The continual Apprehension, in which Murderers live, comes only from this source, they fear with reason the wiles of their Enemies. Now if it be true, that the Opinion of a Danger is enough to strike a Terrour into the

*Arist. de
animâ, l. 3.
c. 3.*

most resolute, how comes it, that the certainty of so many Evils, you have by Faith, which so far exceeds all Science, does not cause you to tremble? If you see, that you have so long liv'd wickedly, that, at least according to present Justice, you are condemn'd to these pains, and that there is nothing, can make you reasonably presume, you shall act better for the future, than you have done for so many years, how can you live at rest in the midst of so evident and so terrible a Danger? Or rather, how is it that you are not in a continual fright, seeing the State, you live in, the Time, you lose, the cruel Regret, you will therefore have, the Shame and Torments, prepar'd for you? This is so strange a Blindness, that 'tis impossible for any one to comprehend it.

CHAP. II.

What the Glory of the Blessed is.

TO the end we may want nothing to incline our Hearts to Vertue, having declar'd to you the Punishments, with which GOD threatens the Wicked, I will speak of the Reward, he promises the Good, which consists in Eternal Glory, and an Immortal Life. 'Tis true, there is not among Angels, or Men, any one able to explain this Recompence, or this Life. But to give you some glimmering, some relish of it, hear, what St. Augustin says. *O admirable Life, which GOD has prepar'd for those he loves! blessed Life, secure Life, quiet Life, pure Life, chaste Life, Life, that knowst not,*

Medit. c. 27.
24. & 25.

not, what Death is, Life without Sorrow, without Labor, without Pain, without Trouble, without Corruption, without Terror, without Change; Life, full of Glory and Honour, where no Enemy offends, no Pleasure corrupts; where Love is perfect, and whence Fear is banisht: where the Day is eternal, where there reigns but one only Spirit in all: where GOD is seen face to face: where that Nourishment is only taken, which never causes any Loathing: how thy Brightness rejoices me, when I consider it, and how agreeable are thy Treasures to my Heart, which desires them. The more I reflect on what thou art, the more I find my self wounded with thy Love; the Desire, I have to enjoy thee, gives me extraordinary Transports, and thy Remembrance is no less sweet to me. O Life, stor'd with all manner of Felicity! Kingdom truly blessed, where Death has no Power, which art without end, to which no time succeeds, where the Day, uninterrupted by any Night, knows not, what Change means; where the Souldier, that has fought well, being joyn'd to the Quires of Angels, and having his head incircled with a Crown of Glory, triumphantly sings to GOD the Songs of Sion. How happy will my Soul be, if, after I have finish'd the Course of this Pilgrimage, I can deserve to see thy Glory, thy Blessedness, thy Beauty, the Walls and Gates, the Places and Palaces of thy City, thy illustrious Inhabitants, and in fine thy Almighty King in all his Beauty, and all his Majesty. Thy Walls are built of precious Stones, thy Gates are set with orient Pearls, thy Places are all of Gold, and there is heard in them nothing, but Songs of Praise; thy Houses are of lasting Stones, and these Stones are Sapphires; their Roofs are cover'd with Vines of Gold, and no Stone has been us'd in them, but what was neat and curiously polish'd. Holy Jerusalem, our Mother, how beautiful art thou in thy Ornaments!

Psalm. 136.

Within thy Circuit is suffred nothing, of what is suffred here below; What is seen there, is very different, from what we daily see. In thee is perceiv'd neither Night, nor Darknes, nor Change of Time; Thou art not enlighened by the Brightness of Lamps, nor by the Moon, or Stars; 'tis GOD, that proceeds from GOD, and the Light, that comes from Light, which gives thee thy Cleareness. The King of Kings himself is in the midst of thee, surrounded with his Officers: 'tis there, the Quires of Angels sound in his ears a melodious Harmony, where are receiv'd with joy all those, that arrive from this World: there is seen the Company of Prophets, the Senat of Apostles, the Army of Martyrs, the Assembly of Confessors, the perfect Religious, the holy Women, who at the same time overcame the Pleasures of the World, and the Weakness of their Sex: There are admir'd so many young Men, and tender Maids, whose Vertue out-stripst their years: There may be counted the innocent Sheep, and Lambs, that escap'd from the Faws of the Wolves, and the deceitful Snares of this Life. Every one of them enjoys a perfect Content in the Place, design'd for him; they are all equal as to the enjoyment, tho the Degree of their happiness is different. Charity reigns there in all its Perfection, because GOD is to them All in all. They behold him without end, and are continually inflam'd with his Love. They always love him, in loving they praise him, in praising they love him, and all their Exercise is to praise him without pain, without weariness, and without labor. When will that happy day come, that freed from this Body, I shall be worthy to hear the celestial Musick, sung to the honor of the eternal King by those, who dwell in this noble Abode? How great will my Happiness be, to be found among the Company of that Royal Chappel, to sing there an Hymn my self, to serve there my King, my GOD, and my

my Lord, and to see him in his Glory, according to the Promises, he made me of it, when he said, Father, Joh. 17. v. 24. whom thou hast given me, I will, that where I am, they also may be with me: that they may see my Glory, which thou hast given me, because thou hast loved me before the creation of the World.

Represent therefore now to your selves, if you have liv'd in GOD's Fear, what a Day that shall be, which shall shine over your Heads, when finishing the Course of this Life, you shall pass from Death to Immortality, and that in the inevitable Moment, when others shall begin to tremble, you shall begin to walk boldly, because you shall perceive the hour of your Redemption to draw nigh. Endeavour, said St. Hierom to the Lib. de cust. Virg. Virgin Eustochium, to get out of the Prison of this Body, and as if you were already at the door of your heavenly Bridegroom, set before your eyes the Reward of your Labors, which is ready for you. Think, what a Day that will be, in which the Blessed Virgin Mary shall come to receive you, accompany'd with a Troop of holy Virgins, and when your Lord, and Spouse, attended by all his Saints, shall present himself before you, saying, Come, and make hast, my Spouse, my fair one, my Dove: for the Winter is past, the Rains and the Storms are ceas'd, and the Flowers begin to appear upon our Land.

How great afterwards shall the Joy be, that your Soul will receive, when it shall be presented by the Angels, and particularly by him, that was its faithful Guardian, before the Throne of the most holy Trinity, and that they shall there declare the good Works, you shall have done, with the Crosses and Labors, you shall have undergone for GOD's sake? St. Luke writes,

that after the death of *Tabitha*, so famous for her Alms-deeds, all the poor people and widows flockt about *St. Peter*, shewing him the Garments, she had given them, and that the Apostle, mov'd with their loss, and desolate condition, pray'd to GOD for this holy woman, and rais'd her again. What a Content will it be to your Soul, when the blessed Spirits, placing you in the midst of them, shall in this Assembly before the Presence of GOD make an exact Relation of your Alms-deeds, your Prayers, your Fastings, the Purity of your Life, your Moderation in Injuries, your Patience in Labors, your Temperance in the use of this Lifes Conveniences, all the Vertues, you shall have exercis'd, and the good Works, you shall have perform'd? What a satisfaction shall you then relish from the Good, you shall have done, when you shall clearly understand the Price and Excellence of Vertue? There the faithful and obedient man shall appear victorious, as the Wise man says, there Vertue shall receive its Reward, and the Good be honor'd according to their Merit.

Prov. 21.

Another Comfort, you shall then enjoy, will be to cast back your eyes on your past Navigation, and consider the Tempests, that have tols'd you, the straits, you have sail'd through, the Dangers, you have escap'd, and the Pirates, you have avoided: There shall you sing this Song of the Prophet: *If the Lord had not assisted me, I was ready to fall into Hell*: Especially, when from that place of Rest and Glory you shall see so many Sins, that are hourly committed in the World, so many Souls, that daily descend into Hell, and how among so many Wretches, that are miserably lost, GOD would save you. What a pleasant

Psal. 93.
v. 17.

fant sight will it be, to behold the Triumphs, that will be daily celebrated, when new Inhabitants, after they have vanquish't the World, and finish't their Course, shall come to receive their Crowns in that blessed City? What a Joy will it be, to see the Seats fill'd, *the Walls repair'd, and the Building of that noble Jerusalem perfectly compleated?* With what Acclamations will they be receiv'd by that cœlestial Court, which shall see them laden with the Spoil of their Enemies? Nor shall men alone enjoy this Glory: There shall be seen also victorious women, that shall have together triumpht over the World, and the Weakness of their Sex. There shall you behold innocent Virgins, crown'd with Roses and Lilies, for having united Martyrdom with Chastity, and at the same time conquer'd the World, and the Flesh. There shall be seen young Children, who shall receive the Recompence of their Purity, their Vertues having out-strip't their years. There in fine shall Friends be recover'd, Masters found again, Kindred known, and after a thousand Embraces a Kiss of Peace be given. The shadow is sweet to those, that have felt the Heat of the Mid-day Sun; a Fountain is refreshing to the thirsty Traveller; Repose is pleasant to the Laborer, that has toil'd all the day: but far more sweet to the Saints will be the Enjoyment of Peace after War, of Safety after Danger, and of eternal Rest after temporary Labors.

The War being ended, Arms, as no longer necessary, are no longer in season. The Children of *Israel* furnisht themselves with good Arms for to conquer the Land of Promise; but having once conquer'd it, they laid by their Spears and Swords, and burying the Disorders of War in oblivion,

Mic. 4 v. 4.

Abac. 2.

Psal. 86. v. 3.

Tob. 13.

oblivion, every one with the Pleasure of Peace enjoy'd the Shade of his Vine, and of his Fig-tree. There the Eyes, tir'd with long watching, may sleep their Fill: there the Sentinel, of whom the Prophet speaks, may come down from his Watch, and leave the keeping of the Tower: there the blessed St. Hierom may now take his Rest, who all his Life watcht day and night, beating his Breast in Prayer, and fighting courageously against all the Powers of the old Serpent. In this place is no longer heard the Ratling of the Enemies Armor. The Viper, that winds it self up into a Bottom, lurks not there to sting us, the venomous sight of the Basilisk does not there annoy us, nor the Hissing of the Serpent wound our tender Ears; nothing is there heard but the sweet Breathing of the Holy Ghost, or seen, but the Glory of G O D. This is the Country of Peace and Security, rais'd above all the Elements, in which are found neither Clouds nor Tempests.

O City of GOD, how great and glorious are the things that have been spoken of thee! Blessed (says holy Tobias) are all that love thee, and that rejoyce upon thy Peace. My Soul, blest thou our Lord, because he has deliver'd Jerusalem his City from all her Tribulations: Blessed shall I be, if there shall remain of my Seed, to see the Glory of Jerusalem. The Gates of Jerusalem shall be built of Saphire and the Emerald, and all the Compass of the Walls thereof, of precious Stone. With white and clean Stone shall all the Streets thereof be paved; and in the Streets thereof Alleluia shall be sung.

O happy Country, how art thou stor'd with Joy! O Glory, full of sweetness! Who shall those be, for whom GOD has prepar'd such a Felicity, and whom he has chosen to enjoy thee? To de-

fire

fire thee, seems very presumptuous, and yet without desiring thee I neither will, nor can live. Children of *Adam*, blind men, straying Sheep, if this is your Sheepfold, whither do you run? why do you suffer your selves to lose so great a Good, rather than take so little pains? If Labor be requisite to obtain thee, let all the Labors in the World be laid upon me, I willingly and heartily accept them: Let Sorrows rain down upon me, let Diseases torment me, let me be persecuted on all sides, let all Creatures conspire against me, let me be the Reproach of men, let the whole World plot my Ruine; let my Life be consum'd in Griefs, and my Years in Groans, provided that after these Storms I may find Rest in the Day of Misery, and ascending to thee may make a part of that People, which is clad with so much Beauty and Glory.

Go now you, that are so foolishly charm'd with the Love of this World, go; seek after Honor, build Palaces, extend, if you can, the limits of your Lands beyond measure, command, if you will, over Kingdoms and Worlds: but assure your selves, that after all this you shall never be so rich, or so great, as the least of GOD's Servants, who shall receive, what the World cannot give, and enjoy, what shall last for ever. You with your Riches and Pomp shall be bury'd in Hell with the rich Glutton, and a despis'd Servant shall with poor *Lazarus* be carry'd by Angels into *Abraham's Bosom*.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The Advantages, GOD promises the Good in this Life.

I Know, what the incredulous and mean spirited may say against that, I have just now represented. They will alledge, that these are future Goods and Evils, that the Heart of man is toucht with present Objects, and that there must be something of this nature to move them. But GOD has of his Goodness abundantly provided for this also, and tho he has reserv'd the most delicate Viands for the end of the Banquet, knowing nevertheless his Childrens weakness, he would not leave them without nourishment, for fear they might faint by the way. Thus when he said to *Abraham*, *Fear not, Abraham, I am thy Protector, and thy Reward exceeding great*; he promis'd him by these words two things: one present, which was his Protection and Assistance in all the Rancounters of this Life; the other future, which was the Reward of Glory, he reserv'd for him till the other. Now none can comprehend how great this first Promise is, nor the vast number of Benefits, it includes, but those, who have diligently read the Scripture, which repeats nothing so often, or so earnestly, as the abundance of the Favors, that GOD promises his Friends in this Life.

Hear what *Solomon* says in his Proverbs on this Subject. *Happy is the man, that findeth Wisdom,*
For

For the Possession of her is better than all the Treasures of Gold and Silver, be they never so precious. She is more to be esteem'd than all the Riches of the World, and all, the Heart of man can desire, is not to be compar'd to her: Length of days is at her right hand, and Riches and Glory at her left: Her Ways are pleasant, and all her Paths are full of Peace. She is a Tree of Life to all those, that have obtain'd her, and he that shall possess her constantly shall be blessed. My Son, keep therefore carefully the Law of GOD, and his Counsels: for thou shalt find in them the Life of thy Soul, and they will give Grace and Blessing to the Words, that shall proceed from thy Mouth. Then shalt thou walk safely in thy way, and thy Feet shall find no Stumbling-block: if thou sleep, thou shalt have nothing to fear; thou shalt take thy rest, and thy sleep shall be sweet. Behold the Felicity and Sweetness, that is found in the way of the Good; but see, what the Scripture teaches us concerning that of the Wicked. 'Tis the Wise man again, who speaks in the Ecclesiastics; *The Way of the Wicked* Ecc. 22: *is all broken, and at the end of their journey they will find only Darkness, Pains, and Hell.* Judge now, there being so strange a Difference between these two Ways, not only in respect of their End, but also of the Steps, which lead to it, whether there can be any Reason to change the Way of GOD for that of the World; and whether it would not be an exceeding Folly, to chuse rather the going through one Torment to many others, than the passing from one Rest to another far greater.

But to the end you may more clearly perceive, how great this Rest is, and know the abundance of the Benefits, that precede it in this Life, I conjure you attentively to consider, what GOD himself in the Prophet *Isaiab* promises those that shall

Isa. 58.
v. 8, 9, &c.

shall keep his Law: I shall relate to you the true sense, which all Interpreters give his Words. When thou shalt do the things, that I command thee, then shall the Dawning of the Day, which is the Sun of Justice, appear over thee, to dissipate all the Darkness of the Errors and Disquiets, that encompass thee; thou shalt presently begin to enjoy a true and perfect health; the Holiness of thy good Works shall go before thee as a Torch, and the Glory of the Lord shall surround thee on every side: Then shalt thou call upon the name of the Lord, and he shall hear thee; thou shalt implore his Assistance, and he shall answer thee, that he is ready to grant thee, whatsoever is necessary for thee: Then shall the Light of GOD's Grace shine forth to comfort thee in the midst of the Darkness, which the Veniations and Miseries of this Life shall have brought upon thee. Thy Darkness shall be as the Noon-day, since the Lord will thro his infinit Goodness bring it to pass, that not only these Miseries, but thy very Falls and Sins also shall serve as an occasion to advance thy happiness; He shall give thy Soul true Peace and true Rest, in the time of Famine and Scarcity he shall give thee Plenty and Abundance, and thy Bones shall be deliver'd from Death and eternal Flames. Thou shalt be as a Garden, that is often water'd, and as a Fountain of living Water, that is never dry; what has long been ruinous in thee, shall be rebuilt on such firm Foundations, that Ages shall not shake it. If thou takest care to solemnize my Festivals, and profan'st not their Holiness by unlawful Sports, if thou dost not thine own Will in opposition to mine, but cheerfully and exactly perform'st what I this day command thee; then shalt thou rejoyce in the Lord, whose Carelles surpass all the Delights of the World, I will place thee above whatsoever is most exalted on Earth, that is, in so happy a state of Life, that all the Power of earthly Fe-

licity and humane Nature cannot come near it; and in fine, to compleat thy Happiness, I will fill thee with all good things, when I shall make thee partaker of that rich Inheritance, I promis'd Jacob thy Father; that is, of heavenly Joy and Glory: for the Mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

GOD's Words are clear: Himself represents the Benefits, he promises his Servants; and tho' some of them are for the future, yet the greatest part of them respects even the present time. Of this Nature is the new Light and heavenly Brightness, with which he enlightens Souls, the abundance of things truly good, wherewith they are fully satisfy'd, their firm and assured Confidence in him, the Easiness, with which he hears all the Prayers of the Just, the Peace and Tranquillity of their Consciences, the particular Protection, he gives them; the Beauty, and as I may say, verdure of Grace signify'd by that well-water'd Garden, of which the Prophet speaks, the continual assistance of all, that is useful for their Salvation, meant by the Fountain, that never dries; those divine Delights and Comforts, which far exceed all worldly Pleasures, and that supernatural Elevation of Mind, the purity of which all the strength of created Nature can never attain to. All these so rare effects are Favors, GOD promises his Elect, Works of his Mercy, Gifts of his Grace, Testimonies of his Love, and Blessings, that shew his particular Providence over them. 'Twould be of great use to treat separately on each of them; but there is so much to be said on so copious a subject, that the Brevity, I design, suffers me not to do it.

'Tis sufficient, that you know, the Good enjoy all these Advantages in this life and the next, while
the

the Wicked are excluded from them in both ; that you thence judge, how great a Difference there is between them, the one being so rich, and the other so poor ; and that you thereby comprehend, that the one are in G O D's favor, the other in his displeasure : the one are his Friends, the other his Enemies : the one are in Light, the other in Darkness : the one tast the Joys of Angels, the other wallow in the pleasures of Beasts : the one are truly free, and Lords of themselves, the other are Slaves of the Devil, and their own irregular Desires : the one are always at Content thro' the interior Testimony of their Conscience, and the other, except they are stark blind, are in continual Disquiets by reason of the Worm, that gnaws their Heart : the one remain always firm in the midst of Afflictions, and the other, like Chaff, are carry'd away by the Wind : the Hope of the one, like an immovable Anchor, places them in Security, and the other, having nothing to support them, are expos'd to all the Assaults of Fortune : the Prayers of the one are acceptable to G O D, and those of the other are despis'd : the Death of the one is sweet, calm, and precious in the eyes of G O D, and that of the other unquiet, troublesom, and disturb'd with a thousand Terrors : and in fine that the one, like G O D's true Children, are in his keeping, and rest sweetly under the shadow of his Providence, as under the protection of their Father and their Pastor, and the other, excluded from this Care, and this manner of Conduct, wander about like stray'd Sheep, without a Master, and without a Shepherd, expos'd to the Mercy of the Wolves, and to all the Dangers and evil Accidents, which are but too common in the World.

Now

Now if all these Advantages are the Companions of Vertue, what hinders you from embracing so great a Good? What can you say to excuse your Negligence? You cannot impute to me the having asserted any thing against the Truth, since I have propos'd nothing but GOD's Word, and the Testimonies of holy Scripture. You cannot say, these Benefits are but small, since we have shewn, they exceed all, that mans heart can desire. You cannot pretend to be so much an Enemy to your self, as to say, you will have none of them, since man so naturally loves himself, that his Will has always Good for its Object, it being the mark, at which all his desires aim. To alledge, you neither comprehend them, nor tast them, will not exempt you from Blame, since, tho' you have no sense of them, yet you believe them thro' Faith: for indeed the sense of them may be lost by Sin, but not the Faith. Now Faith is a more certain, more secure, and more unquestionable proof, than all other Testimonies and Experiences in the World. You ought then with this Testimony to contradict all others, and give more credit to Faith, than to your own Senses and Judgment: and if you had but once made a strong Resolution to cast your self into GOD's Arms, you would soon find the Effects, of which these Prophecies speak, accomplisht in you; you would know how to set a value on the Excellency of these divine Treasures; you would see, how blind the Lovers of this World are, that they seek not after such advantageous Favors; and you would discern, with how much Reason our Saviour invited you to embrace this Life, when he said, *Come ye to me all that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you.* Take up my yoke upon you,

Ma^t. 11^e.
v. 28, 29, 30.

D

and

and you shall find rest to your Souls. For my Yoke is sweet, and Burden light. GOD is no Deceiver, he makes no false Promises, nor does he enhance their value. Why then do you fly? Why do you renounce quietness and Peace? Why do you slight the Caresses and Voice of your Pastor? How come you to abandon Vertue, having such a Promise, sign'd, as I may say, by GODS own hand? The Queen of *Saba* heard far less things of *Solomon*, and she came from the Ends of the Earth, to be assur'd of what she had heard, and will you be so little careful of your self, that being inform'd such wonderful things of Vertue, you will not hazard a little pains, to know at least, whether they are true? Trust then in GOD and his holy Word; boldly deliver your selves up to him, get rid of those Trifles, that hinder you, and you will soon know, that the Merit and Worth of Vertue, far exceeds the Praises, which are given her; and that all, we can say of her, is nothing, in comparison to what she is indeed.

CHAP. IV.

That a Man never ought to delay his Conversion, having so many Debts to discharge, incur'd by the Faults of his past Life.

IF on the one side the Reasons, that oblige us to change our Life, are so important, and so numerous, and on the other, nothing can excuse us from making this Change: tell me, what Time

Time you expect for the applying your self to so necessary a Work. Cast your Eyes on your past Life, and at what Age soever you are, know, tis Time, that you begin to discharge your Conscience of your old Debts. Consider, that you are *Christians*, that you are regenerated by the sacred Waters of Baptism, that you have GOD for your Father, ever since the Church became your Mother in this divine Sacrament, that you have been nourisht with the Milk of the Gospel, the Doctrine of the Apostles, and what is incomparably more holy, with the very Bread of Angels in the most august Sacrament of the Altar, and that with all these Advantages and Graces you have liv'd as licentious, as if you had been meer Pagans, having no knowledge of the true GOD. What Sin have you not committed? Where is the forbidden Tree, on which you have not with a cast your Eyes? What green Meadow has been exempted, at least from your Desires, and irregular Concupiscences? There has not any Object been presented before you, but has rendred your Looks criminal; there has been no sensual Desire in you, which you have not endeavour'd to content, tho' you knew, you had a GOD, and were *Christians*. What could you have done more, had you been without any Faith at all; had you expected no other Life, had you fear'd no future Judgment? Consider, that your Life has been a continual Train of Sins, a Mass of Vices, a Way of Precipices, and an inexcusable Disobedience to GOD's Will. You have till this time had Commerce only with your Passions; the Flesh, Honour, the World, have been hitherto your Gods; they have been the Idols, you have serv'd, and whose Laws you have al-

ways kept, thinking no more on GOD, and the Obedience, you owe him, than if he had been a GOD of Wood or Metal. I say nothing to you but the Truth, there being but too great a Number of *Christians*, who firmly believing, that there is a GOD, sin with as much ease, as if they certainly knew, there were none; and being fully perswaded of the Truth, do the same Actions, as if they were assur'd, it were a Lye. Certainly, Brethren, you cannot do a greater Injury to Almighty GOD, you can no way more sensibly affront his Divine Majesty, nor more clearly manifest the Excess of your Blindness, than by believing all, that the *Christian* Religion teaches, and living, as if it were the most notorious Fable in the World.

This is a Point, that deserves to be duly consider'd, and if the Multitude of your Sins, and the Easiness, with which you have committed them, does not terrify you, let at least the Greatness of him, you have offended, make some impression on you. Lift up your Eyes, and behold the infinite Majesty of that Lord, whom all the Powers of Heaven adore, before whom the whole World prostrates it self, in whose presence all created things are but like the Chaff, that is driven away by the Wind; and then consider, how great a Crime it is, for such Worms of the Earth, as we, to have been so audacious, as so often to offend him, and with so much Insolency provoke the Indignation of the Worlds sole Monarch.

Nothing exasperates GOD so much as Sin, and of this we have many very evident Proofs, by the severe Chastisements, with which his Justice has punisht it, not only in particular persons,

sons, but also in great Cities, in Provinces, in Kingdoms, in Nations; and finally in the whole World. His just wrath extended it self not only over the Earth, Heaven was not exempt from it; nor was it executed only on Sinners and Strangers, but on the Innocence of his own Son; who undertook to satisfy for them. And *if these things were done in green wood*, and for others sins, *what shall be done in the dry*, which is found loaden with its own Offences? And can there be imagin'd any greater Folly, than for a weak and miserable Man to presume to mock a G O D, whose Hand is so powerful, that it can in one only instant thrust him for ever into Hell?

On the other side, consider G O D's extream Patience, with which he has all along from the very first time of your offending him waited for your Repentance; and assure your self, if after so many years of Goodness, as he has made use of to bring you to do Penance, you still abuse his Mercy, and so little fear his Anger; *He will take his Bow in his hand, will empty his Quiver, and let fly against you a shower of mortal Arrows.* LUC. 23. av. 31. ps. 7. v. 12. 13.

Consider besides the depth of his Judgments, of which we read, and daily see such strange Effects. We see *Solomon*, after he had receiv'd such great Wisdom, after he had utter'd three thousand Proverbs, after he had been enlightned with the Knowledge of the most abstruse Mysteries, so far at last forsaken, as to prostrate himself before false Gods. We see one of the Churches first seven Deacons, after so many Graces, and after his receiving of the Holy Ghost, become not only an Heretick, but the chief of Heresiarchs. We see every moment so

D 3

many

many glittering Stars fall miserably from Heaven, pleas'd with wallowing in the Mire, and reduc'd to the Food of Swine instead of the Bread of Angels, with which they were fed at their Fathers Table. Now if the Just, after so many years Service, either for some secret Pride, or for want of Care, or thro' some conceal'd Ingratitude, are thus abandon'd by GOD, what must they expect, who have all their Life, scarce done any thing, but multiply Offences?

Can then any thing more reasonable be propos'd to all those, that are engag'd in this manner of Life, than to leave it off? Can any thing be more Just, than to exhort them, no longer to add Sin to Sin, and Debt to Debt, but to begin at length to serve GOD, and ease their Souls of so heavy a Burden? Have they not given enough to the Flesh, the World, and the Devil? Is it not fit, that, after so long delay, they should give something of what is left them to him, who gave them all? In fine, is it not Time, after so many Injuries, to fear the divine Justice, which is so much the severer against the Wicked, as it has suffer'd them with greater Patience? Ought any thing so justly to be fear'd, as the continuing so long in Sin, and GOD's Displeasure? as the having so powerful an Adversary, and making him instead of a merciful Father a Judge, and an Enemy? Ought any thing more to be apprehended, than the Force of ill Custom, which changes into Nature, and makes almost a Necessity of Vice? And finally, is there any thing so formidable, as the letting ones self go by little and little to so dangerous a Precipice, as a reprobate Sense, into which when a Man is once fallen, he no longer cares for
any

any thing? The Patriarch Jacob said to his Father-in-Law Laban: *Fourteen years have I served thee, and taken care of thy Goods: is it not now time for me to look to my self, and begin to provide for mine own House?* Thus is it not fit, that after so many years, as you have employ'd in the Service of this World, you should begin to think on your Soul, and provide for that, which is to come? There is nothing so short, or so frail, as Mans Life? Why then do you labour with so much earnestness to store up for a thing of so short a continuance, and never think of making any Reserve for a Life; that shall last for ever?

Gen. 30. v.
29, 30.

CHAP. V.

Conclusion.

IF the things, we have hitherto represented, are so certain, that they cannot be doubted of; I conjure you now, Brethren, by the precious Blood of JESUS CHRIST, to remember your selves, to consider, that you are *Christians*, and to hold truly all, that Faith teaches you. She teaches you, that you have above you a Judge, who watches over all your Actions, before whom all the moments of your Life are present, and that there will come a Day, when he will ask you an account of them, even to an idle Word. She teaches you, that Man ends not with Death, but that after this Transitory Life there remains another, which lasts for ever. She teaches you, that the Souls dy not

with the Bodies ; but that, the Body remaining in the Grave, the Soul enters into a new World, where she shall have Entertainment and Company, suitable to the Life, she has led in this. She teaches you, that the Reward of Vertue, and Punishments of Vice are so great, that, tho the whole World were full of Books, and all Creatures employ'd to write, yet would the World want Writers and Books, before what each of these two things comprehends, could be fully explain'd. And in fine she teaches you, that you are so much indebted to GOD, and his Gifts are so great, that, tho Man had as many Lives, as there are Sands in the Sea, they would be all but little to be employ'd in his Service.

Since then we have such powerful Motives to incline us to Vertue, whence comes it, that there are found so few, who love and follow it? If Men are guided by Interest, what greater Interest can there be, than an Eternal Life? If they fear Punishment, what Torment can be greater than that, which lasts for ever? If Favours and Obligations win the Heart, what Obligations can equal those, we have to GOD, as well in respect of what he is, as in consideration of what we have receiv'd from his Bounty? If we are toucht with the Fear of Dangers, what is more to be apprehended than Death, the hour whereof is so incertain, and which engages us to so exact an Account? If Peace, Liberty, Repose of Mind, and a pleasant Life, are things, which every one desires, 'tis clear, they are far better found in the Life which is govern'd by the Rules of Vertue, than in that, which is guided only by Fancy, and Passion, since Man is a reasonable Creature, and by reason differs from Beasts?

Beasts? And in fine, if all this seems but little to oblige you to have the Esteem, you ought, for so important a matter, is it not enough, you know, that **G O D** came down from Heaven, and was made Man for this purpose; and that having compleated the Creation of the whole World in seven days, he bestowed three and thirty years on this Work, and even laid down his own Life to bring it to perfection? **G O D** dy'd to make Sin dy, and yet you will make this Monster live, which **G O D** by his own Death would make to dy. What can I say more? We have but too many Reasons, if we will make use of them in treating on this Subject. I no longer bid you behold a **G O D** fastned to a Cross; 'tis sufficient to look on his Creatures: which way soever you turn your Eyes, you will find all things calling you, and inviting you to this excellent Good: since there is no Creature, but speaks to us, and teaches us, that we ought to love and serve **G O D**. Thus whatsoever things there are in the World, they are all so many Preachers, so many Voices, and so many Reasons, which call us to **G O D**.

Is it then possible, that all these Voices, all these Promises, and all these Threats, are not forcible enough to bring us to him? Could **G O D** do more, than he has done? Could he promise any thing greater? Could he threaten us with any thing more terrible, to win us, and withdraw us from Sin? And yet such is the Presumption of Men, that believe these Truths, or rather such is the Charm, wherewith they are bewitcht, that they fear not to continue all their Life in Sin, to ly down in Sin, to rise up in Sin, and to abandon themselves to all sorts of Crimes,

Crimes, with as little Scruple and Apprehension, with as much Rest in their Sleep, and as much Satisfaction at their Meals, as if all, they believe, were but Dreams, and the Gospel told them nothing but Fables. Rebellious Souls, obstinate Spirits, hardened Hearts, Fire-brands prepar'd to burn in Flames for ever, what could you do more, if all, that you believe, pass'd with you for Lies? The Fear of the World makes you moderate your Desires, and that of G O D has no operation on you. It hinders you not from gratifying your Lusts, from taking revenge on all, that displease you, and Executing, if it be in your Power, whatever your Passions inspire to you. Blind and senseless, as you are, feel you not amidst the Assurance, in which you live, some Remorse of Conscience? Are Reason and Judgment quite extinct in you? Is it possible, that so great, so certain, and so real Dangers terrify you not at all? If a Dish of Meat were set before you, and some one, whom you even suspect to be a Liar, should acquaint you, there were Poison in it, would you dare to touch it, how delicious and inviting soever it might be, and how uncertain, or unlikely soever, the Information, that was given you, might appear? The Prophets, the Apostles, the Evangelists, G O D himself, cry out aloud, and say to you: *Miserable men, Death is in that Dish, Death is in that delicious Morsel, which the Devil sets before you*; and you are so besotted, as to let your own Hands give you your Death, by eating what destroys you. Reason and Judgment have no longer any Place in you, this Light is extinct, their very Snuff is quite put out: since they are not able to put a stop to the least of your Vices. Mad men,

men, enchanted by the Artifices of your Enemy, Condemn'd for ever to interior and exterior Darkness, to pass from the one to the other; Blind men, who see not your Misery, who are insensible of your Unhappiness, and who, being harder than the Adamant, are not mollify'd by the divine Words: How wretched you are! How fit you are to be lamented with those very Tears, with which our Saviour bewail'd your Loss, when he said: *If you had known, and that in this your day, the things that pertain to your Peace, but now they are hid from your Eyes!* How unfortunate was the Day of your Birth, how deplorable will be that of your Death, since it shall see your last Condemnation! It had been better for you never to have receiv'd Life, than to be lost for ever: It had been better for you never to have been Baptiz'd, never to have receiv'd any Light of Faith, than to have rendred your Condemnation more terrible, by having misus'd these Graces. For if the Philosophers, as the Apostle says, were inexcusable, because having Reason enough to know G O D, they glorify'd him not, as they ought; those shall without doubt be far more culpable, who after the inestimable Grace of Baptism, after the Gift of Faith, and after having ever year receiv'd their G O D in their Mouths, have done nothing more than these Philosophers.

What then can we conclude from this Discourse, but that there is no other Prudence, no other Wisdom, no other Counsel to be taken in this World, than to renounce the Hurry, and Tumult of this Life, and betake our selves to the only and true way, that leads us to an assur'd Peace, and a Life, that never ends? This Reason

Luc. 19.

v. 42.

Rom. 1.

v. 20, 21.

Ecclef. c. 6.
v. 18, 19.

v. 23, 24,
25, 26, 27,
28, 29.

son commands us: to this Prudence, Faith, Heaven, Earth, Hell, Life, Death, G O D's Justice and Mercy, all call us: and to this, does the Holy Ghost, by the Mouth of Ecclesiasticks, particularly invite us. *My Son*, says he, *hearken to Instruction from the first years of thy youth, and in thy later dayes thou shalt enjoy the sweet Fruits of Wisdom. Come unto her, as one that ploweth and soweth, and with patience expect her fruitful increase: for thou shalt not labour much, and in a short time thou shalt have great Benefits. My Son, hearken to my Words, and despise not the Counsel, which I shall give thee. Put thy Feet willingly into her Fetters, and thy Neck into her Chains. Bow down thy Shoulders, and bear her, and be not displeased with her Bonds. Draw nigh unto her with thy whole Heart, and follow her wayes with all thy power. Search for her with diligence, and she will discover her self to thee; and when thou hast found her, let her not go. For by her thou shalt find rest in thine old Age, and that, which before seemed grievous to thee, shall be turned into exceeding Joy. Then shall her Fetters be a Defence of thy Strength, and her Chain a Robe of Glory.*

These Words of the Wise Man concern you, and the Holy Ghost dictated them, only to let us understand in an excellent manner, how great the Beauty, the Delights and Riches are of true Wisdom, which is nothing else but Vertue, and that amorous Knowledge of G O D, of which we treat. But if your Heart is not yet won by so many Benefits, lift up your Eyes on high, and mind no longer the fleeting Waters of this World; but turn your Face towards your Master, whom you behold dying on the Cross, and satisfying for your Sins. If you consider the Po-
sture,

sture, in which he is, you will see, that he has his Feet fastned with Nails, to stay for you, his Arms stretcht out to receive you, and his Head bowing down to give you, as to the Prodigal Son, a Kiss of Peace. From thence (if you will hear him) he calls, with as many Voices, as there are gaping Wounds on his Body. Give Ear to him, listen to his Gries, and believe, that, if his Prayer is not heard, who hearkned not to the poor Mans Complaint, much more ought yours to be rejected, if you continue deaf to the Voice of GOD. Now, if at last this powerful Voice has toucht you, if you are firmly resolv'd to change your Life, and betake your self to true Penance, the following Book will shew you, how this is to be done.

THE

THE SECOND BOOK

OF Penance and Confession.

The Preface.

OF all the Evils, that at this day reign in the World, there is none more deplorable than the manner, many *Christians* use in confessing their Sins, at such time as the Church commands it: for except a small number, that live in the fear of *GOD*, and take some care of their Souls, the rest bring not any Preparation to this Divine Sacrament, never scrupling to come unto it, without giving themselves the least Trouble to examine their Consciences. Thence it happens, that they have no sooner ended their Confession, and been partakers of the holy Communion, but they again resume their former Course, and the Week, appointed them for their Penance is scarce ended, when they plunge themselves afresh in the Mire, out of which 'twas endeavour'd to draw them, and return like Dogs to their Vomit.

As

As this Disorder cannot be committed without becoming guilty of the highest Contempt against GOD and his Church, his Ministers and Sacraments; and as it is indeed a Mocking of his Goodness, to ask him once a year Pardon for the Injuries, we have done him; to protest unto him, that we will amend; and presently after fall to committing of greater Offences: so it usually happens, that His Divine Majesty, justly provok't against such insolent Prevaricators, exercises on them the most dreadful of all Punishments; but also the most just, and the most suitable to their Fault. He leaves them entirely to themselves; he suffers them thus to make a Mockery of things the most holy, even to the end of their Lives: and when they are surpriz'd by Death, they are found like those, who till that time never had done true Penance; that is, *Their End*, as the Apostle speaks, *is according to their Works.* *They have not returned unto me with their whole heart, but with Lying,* says our Lord, by a Prophet. *They have us'd Lying and Hypocrisy, and I will deal with them,* says the Lord, *as with Deceivers and Hypocrites.* With good reason does he give the Name of *Lying* to all false and outside Penance, ordinarily done by Worldly People; for indeed there is nothing more false. They think to deceive GOD, and in the meantime they deceive themselves: they flatter themselves, and esteem themselves Penitents, because they have done something exteriorly which resembles Penance, and it is altogether unprofitable and unfruitful.

Let them then take care to dispose themselves to true Penance; and if any one makes this generous Resolution, and desires to be truly Penitent,

2 Cor. 11.
v. 15.
Jeh. 3. v. 10.

tent, I will in few words, declare to him, what it is he must do. I will for this purpose set before you the most common Advices, given by the Fathers: I call them common, because they are very clear to those, that have any Knowledge of Divinity; but since they are unknown, and not understood by the simple, for whose Salvation we have principally undertaken this Work, we shall treat of them clearly and in order. This Sacrament consists of three principal Parts, Contrition, Confession, and Satisfaction; and because 'tis of the greatest Importance for these three things to be perfect, discoursing of each of them separately and in particular, we shall succinctly shew you, what true Penance is.

CHAP. I.

Of the first Part of Penance, which is Contrition, and the Means to obtain it.

HE then, that unfeignedly desires to be converted, He, that well instructed in the Vanity of the World, and the Obligation, he has to serve GOD, resolves with the Prodigal Child, to return to his Fathers House; He, I say must know, that Contrition is the first and principal Gate, by which he is to enter into it; and that this is one of the most valuable and most agreeable Sacrifices, that can be offer'd to Almighty GOD; which made the Prophet say, *A Sacrifice to GOD is a contrite Spirit: a contrite and humble Heart, ô GOD, thou wilt not despise.*

PL 50. v. 19.

Now in this Contrition there are two principal Parts:

Parts: the one is an Horror of past Sins, the other a Resolution of future Amendment. This we say, because Contrition, to speak properly, is an Aversion from, and an Hatred of Sin, inasmuch as GOD is offended by it; and consequently he, that truly hates Sin, equally detests the Sins, he has committed, and those, he may commit: because the one and the other are equally displeasing to GOD. There is notwithstanding this Difference, that as to past Offences, since they cannot now be recall'd, 'tis sufficient to look back upon them with Sorrow; but as for those to come, which depend on the Will, there must be a firm Resolution never to commit them. Thus is clearly seen, as St. *Augustin* teaches in his Book of the Remedy of Penance, that 'tis not sufficient for the appeasing of GOD, that Men change their Lives, and renounce their past Sins; but that they are oblig'd also, for the satisfying GOD's Honour, whom they have affronted, to have Recourse to the Remedies, that accompany Penance; they must be sorrowful, they must groan, they must offer in Sacrifice a Contrite and humbled heart, and efface their Crimes by Works of Mercy.

According to this, the first thing, a true Penitent ought to endeavour, is to have a great Sorrow for his Offences, entering into the Sentiments of that holy Penitent, who said: *I will call to mind before thee, ô Lord, all the years of my life in the bitterness of my Soul.* And this Sorrow ought not principally to proceed from the Sinners having by his Crimes deserv'd Hell, and lost Heaven, with all the Benefits, that are lost by sinning, tho' this likewise is good, but for that he

E

has

has by them lost GOD and offended him: for since GOD deserves to be lov'd and esteem'd above all things, Reason wills, that we be far more afflicted for losing and offending him, than for any thing else whatsoever: the greatest of all offences requires most of all to be repented; and the greatest of all Losses to be most of all bewail'd. It is notwithstanding true, that GOD's Mercy is such, and the Desire, he has to save us, so great, that, tho' the Sorrow be not altogether such, as I have describ'd, yet the vertue of the Sacrament, which gives Grace to him, who puts no impediment to the receiving it, being join'd unto it, will suffice for the attaining to Salvation. This is, what Divines commonly say, that the Sacraments of the Law of Grace, of Attrition make a Man Contrite; and as a Candle, that is newly put out, and has not yet done smoaking, is easily lighted by the least puff, and of dead, as it was, becomes living: So the Soul, which yields some smoak by the vertue of Attrition, tho' it yet burns not, is easily inflam'd, and of Dead becomes Alive by the Power of the Sacrament. But to know, what the Attrition is, that suffices to produce this effect, is not, Brethren, given to Men; GOD only knows it, from whom nothing is hid.

You shall observe also, for the Comfort of the Weak, that 'tis not always necessary for the Sorrow, of which we speak, to be of the Nature of those, that are term'd sensible, because they are in the sensitive part of the Soul, and produc'd exteriorly by Tears. One may, without this, be truly sorrowful, and truly penitent, as when our will detests Sin above all things, how odious soever, which often happens without the shedding

shedding of Tears, or feeling this kind of Sorrow.

We shall hereafter explain, how the Grief, necessary to make one truly penitent, may be acquir'd, and by what means the possession of so great a Good may be attain'd to. In the mean time I shall tell you, that the second thing, and the most important to the having this Contrition, is to form in ones self a firm Resolve never to offend GOD by any mortal Sin: This Resolve, as well as the Regret for Sins committed, must not have for its principal Motive, either Heaven, Hell, or any other Interest, that respects our Selves, but the Love of GOD alone; and the Sinner ought in this point to resemble a Vertuous Wife, whose Heart is firmly resolv'd rather to lose her Life, than violate the Faith, she has promis'd her Husband, and who is not thus resolute in preserving her Loyalty to him, so much for fear or Interest, as for the Love, she bears him. This is the Disposition, I desire in you, tho' to fear the Pains of Hell, or to wish for Heaven with its Recompenses, is not an evil thing, but profitable and commendable, as being a Gift of GOD.

Moreover, as the Penitent is oblig'd to have a firm Resolution to avoid Sin for the future, so he must forsake the Sins, to which he is yet subject, if they are mortal, otherwise his Confession will no longer be a Confession, but a Sacrilege, and an Affront to the Sacrament. He, that confesses, and he, that absolves him in this Condition, would be equally guilty; and so this Confession, instead of blotting out old Sins, would serve only to heap up new ones. Beware falling into this Misfortune, take heed of making a Poi-

son of a Medicine, or a Condemnation, of what GOD has instituted for your Remedy, and forget not any Care to recover out of Mortal Sin, if you are once fallen into it: consequently, if a Man has any Hatred in his Soul against his Neighbours, or if this Hatred have pass'd so far, as to a form'd Enmity, he must before all things put off this ill will, be reconcil'd to him, and restore his Reputation, if he has endeavour'd to deprive him of it; especially, if there might happen any dangerous Scandal by not doing it; in which the Advice of a discreet Confessor is to be follow'd. This is, what often happens, and this Conduct is wholly necessary, when there is found any one, who refuses his Brother the Pardon, he asks of him in the Court (as 'tis term'd) of Conscience, for by this Hardness he scandalizes his Brother, and stirs up afresh his Hatred against himself.

'Tis the same with the Restitution of anothers Goods, which must be immediatly restor'd to the Person, to whom they belong; I say immediatly, because this Restitution must not be delay'd, when it can be done, nor is it sufficient for you to have an Intention of restoring hereafter, or by your Will, if you can out of hand acquit your self of this Obligation, tho' it be by inconveniencing your self, especially if he, whose Goods you detain, is himself in the same, or such like streight. There are many things to be said touching the Necessity of immediate Restitution, and there are many false Pretences, with which, as are unwilling to restore, flatter and deceive themselves; those, that desire to be secure in Conscience, will take advice of such understanding persons, as are able to undeceive them;

them; and in the mean time let them know, that not only he, who has taken another Mans Goods, or done him some Dammage, is bound to restore the one, and repair the other; but he also, that has been the occasion of it, he, that has either counsell'd it, or consented to it, he, that has receiv'd the Malefactor into his House, as a Malefactor, he, that has bought any thing of a suspected person, he that has hidden, or conceal'd him in his House, and in fine he, that has not hindred the Evil, if 'twas in his Power to do it. All these, and every one of them in particular, are bound entirely to restore the Dammage, that has been caus'd by any of these wayes, and any one of them having satisfy'd it, all the rest are oblig'd to reimburse him, who has paid for them all.

As there is a sort of Restitution, that regards Goods unjustly detain'd, so there are two others, that respect Reputation and Honour. The first is, if we have publisht some important and secret Fault of our Neighbours: and the second, if we have done him any injury by word or deed. In the first place we are oblig'd, if it may be advantageous to him, to restore the good Opinion, that might have been had of him, and to repair by words of Deference and Esteem the Lustre of his Reputation, which we had endeavour'd to tarnish: and for the second, 'tis absolutely necessary to satisfy the person, we have offended, either by asking him pardon, or doing him some other Service, that may equal the Injury, he has suffer'd, or by both, according to the Advice of a discreet Confessor. Thus you see three different Restitutions, we are bound to, to wit, of Goods, of Reputation, and of Honour,

nour, on which none can be too exact in examining himself for the Discharge of his Conscience.

Another Point, which is of very great importance, and without which, there cannot be any true and solid Penance, is the avoiding of dangerous occasions. Thus those, that have any dishonest Commerce, that are engag'd in any evil Design, or in any unlawful Affection, are oblig'd to shun this Plague, if they will receive the Grace of the Sacrament.

Nor is it enough, that your Heart is remov'd from Sin, unless you remove also the occasion of sinning: for otherwise you will difficultly avoid it. 'Tis a dangerous Error, into which many persons fall, who rectifying, as they believe, their Intention, imagine all to be safe, not perceiving, that the Seed of the Evil is in them, which will never fail to spring forth in its time. St. Bernard saw very clearly into this Misfortune, when he said: *You converse daily with a Woman, and do you pretend to be esteem'd chaste? Tho' you should be so, you cannot at least avoid the giving occasion to evil suspicions; and I tell you, that by acting thus you cause a Scandal, of which you ought to take away both the cause and the matter, since 'tis written: Wo to that man, by whom the Scandal cometh. And the same Saint in one of his Sermons on the Canticles, says another word, which ought far more to frighten us: 'Tis perhaps a greater Miracle for a Man to dwell with a Woman without losing his Chastity, than to raise a dead Man to life. If you cannot do, what is easier, how will you have me believe, that you will do, what is more difficult?*

Wherefore you must absolutely break this Commerce; you must banish all occasions of Sin;

Mat. 18.
v. 8.

Sin ; especially when the Vail of Modesty has been once remov'd, and the Evil taken its course : for as long as this Door is open to it , 'tis impossible, morally speaking, but it will continue, and you be daily more irrecoverably engag'd in it. But if you tell me , 'tis difficult for you to separate from this occasion, because you must put out of your House some person, to whom you have great Obligations, or who is very necessary to you : I answer this ill Excuse by the words of our Saviour : *If thy hand, or thy foot scandalize thee : cut it off, and cast it from thee. It is good for thee to go into life maimed, or lame, rather than having two hands, or two feet, to be cast into everlasting Fire.* Mat. 18. v. 8. This Remedy seems harsh : but as there are some corporal Diseases, which cannot be Cur'd, but by the Knife and the Fire, and as a Limb must be sometimes cut off to save the Body : so there are some spiritual Distempers, which require Remedies no less severe. GOD's Law, which is very sweet, and very equitable, is not to be blam'd for this ; the Fault is rather yours, Sinner, who have renounc't all shame, who have voluntarily thrown your self into the Evil, who have taken pleasure to provoke and rouse up a Wild Beast in his own Den , where you can neither fly, nor defend your self. No wonder then, that you suffer the Punishment, you have deserv'd, that you reap, what you have sown, and that you undergo much toil, to drive your Enemy out of your House , since your self open'd the Door to let him in.

CHAP. II.

Of the principal Means to obtain Contrition, and particularly of true Sorrow for Sin.

YOU have seen, what concerns the two most essential parts of Contrition: Let us now see, by what means they may be attain'd to, and principally examine the first of these Conditions, which is the Sorrow for having offended GOD.

Let him then, who with all his heart desires to obtain this precious Jewel, know, that the most efficacious of all Means is to beg it of GOD with a profound humility. True Contrition is a particular Favor, an excellent Gift of GOD, and a work surpassing all the Powers of Nature, infected by Original Sin. GOD created it in Righteousness, and this Misery turn'd it aside. He created it wholly just, and elevated to him: but Vice corrupted it, and made it turn back toward it self, that is, towards the Love of visible Goods, which it desires and esteems more than GOD. Thus, as there is no Remedy in Nature to recover a Man, born crooked, and bowing towards the Earth: so our Will being born in this Imperfection, there is none but GOD, who is capable to reform it, and raise it up to him by making it love him above all things; and as Man cannot have this Love without GOD's Grace, so he cannot, without the particular Assistance of his Divine Goodness, have a Sorrow for Sin, surpassing all things. For the one is the Consequence of the

the other. For this cause JESUS CHRIST says in the Gospel: *No man can come to me, unless* Joh: 6. v. 8. *my Father draw him :* For to come to JESUS CHRIST is to love him above all things ; and to have a sorrow for Sin, exceeding all other, which none can have of himself, but GOD must give it.

This Grace is extraordinary, and when GOD grants it to a Sinner, 'tis the greatest Favor, he can do him : for tho' it be more to give Glory than Grace, 'tis nevertheless more difficult to draw a man out of Sin, and place him in a state of Grace, than to give him Glory, after Grace has been given him ; the distance from Sin to Grace being undoubtedly far greater, than from Grace to Glory. And St. Thomas, speaking of GOD's works, affirms, That the Justification of a Sinner i. 2. q. 113. art. 9. is a greater work than the Creation of the World, because all the Being of the World is but a finite and limited Good, as all created things are ; but the Justification of Man is a participation of GOD's Greatness and Glory, which is an infinite Good.

If then this Sorrow be so great a Gift of GOD, it follows, that we must ask it of him with earnestness, imitating the Woman of Canaan in her perseverance: *Have mercy on me, O Lord, the Son* Mat. 15. v. 28. *of David: my Daughter (that is, my Soul) is sore vexed of a Devil.* But if GOD be at the beginning a little severe, as he was towards the *Canaanites*, be not discourag'd, nor cease to invoke him, for he us'd this Conduct towards that woman, only to teach us, not to lose Confidence, but to persevere, as she did, in prayer even to the end. GOD is faithful, says the Apostle, *he cannot* 2 Tim. 2. v. 12. *deny himself.* And to assist you in so important

a matter, as this of Prayer, we shall hereafter set down certain Prayers, to the end those, who know not yet how to speak to GOD of themselves, nor to represent to him their Necessities, may make known their Hearts to him, and beg this Grace of him.

The second means to acquire this Grace is, that he, who shall find himself toucht by GOD, chuse a Time and Place fit for retirement, that retreating into himself, he may seriously meditate on all those things, which may excite him to sorrow for his sins. The more attention and care he shall employ, to consider the causes there are for it, the more clearly he will see the Reasons, that ought to incline him to bewail his Misery; he will find, how Nature has not without cause ordain'd, that the same sense, which serves a man to see, should serve him also to weep; that the one is a consequence of the other; that he, who sees, as he should, weeps in the same manner; and that he, who knows how to behold his sins, as they ought to be beheld, will know how also to lament them, as they ought to be lamented. Let the Sinner then open his Eyes to view his Faults, let him first observe their Multitude, then let him consider the Greatness of the GOD, he has offended, and by these two Considerations he will know the just causes, he has to be afflicted.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Considerations, that may help a Penitent to conceive an horror of his Sins. First, of their Multitude.

§. I.

TO excite in your Soul this lively sorrow, you must at first set before your Eyes the whole Course of your Life, and represent to your Conscience all the sins, with which you have in so long a time defil'd it, and all the ill uses, you have made of so many Graces, as you have receiv'd from GOD; and because sin is nothing else, but a turning away from the sovereign Good, and from the End, for which Man was created, consider attentively, what this End is, and you will but too clearly see, how far you have departed from it. The End, for which GOD plac'd Man in the World, was not to plant Gardens, to build Houses, to heap up Riches, nor yet to live in Delights, as the Lives and Actions of the most part of men seem to perswade us; but to the end he might know GOD, love him, keep his Commandments, and by that means attain to the highest Felicity, for which he was created. For this purpose he gave him a Law, which he is oblig'd to follow, Grace to observe this Law, Sacraments, which confer Grace, Doctors to teach him, and Inspirations to draw him; and which is far more, he has given also himself,

to

to be the Price and Remedy of all our Evils. For this same purpose he bestow'd on him the Gifts of Nature, which are Life, Health, Strength, the Faculties of the Soul, the Senses and Members of the Body, to the end he might employ all these things in the service of him, who gave them to him: And in fine, he plentifully furnisht him with the Goods, as they are usually call'd, of Fortune, to the end he might make use of them to preserve his own Life, to comfort his Neighbours, and to help himself by them, as by means afforded him for the meriting eternal Glory.

See now whether you have satisfi'd the Intentions of your Creator; see, how you have us'd all these Benefits, and in what manner you have acquitted your self of all these Duties. If you at first look to the end, for which he created you, and at the same time consider that, which you have chosen, you will see, how far you have stray'd from that of G O D. He created you for himself, to the end you should employ your Understanding, your Memory, and your Will for him, and that you might place in him all your Love and all your Hope; and you on the contrary, forgetting these Obligations, have with an intolerable contempt made use of all these Benefits, only to fix your self to the World, and to give to the Creature, what is due to none but the Creator. You have lov'd the Creature, you have ador'd it, you have plac'd your Hope and your Joy in it, and thus you have given to mortal things, what belongs to their and your Lord, and have plac'd on the earthly goods, what you ought to have plac'd on the heavenly. You will by this means know, how ill you have perform'd the first of G O D's Commandments, which concerns

cerns this Duty ; you will see, in what forgetfulness of GOD you have liv'd, since you have scarce thought on him all your Life long ; you will perceive, how ungrateful you have been for his Benefits, since perhaps you have never so much as thank't him for them ; you will discern the little esteem, you have made of his Commands, since you have so often violated them ; that you have continually wanted love for him, who deserves so much, giving still the far greatest share to worldly Toys and Trifles ; and in fine you will see, how you were fallen into such blindness, that you have given all your Affections to the miserable Worms of the Earth, having had no sentiments for this so excellent Majesty.

Represent also to your self, how often you have sworn, and even in vain, by his most holy and dreadful Name, having had nothing so ordinarily in your mouth, for to favor your Obstinacy, and to confirm your Lyes. See, in what manner you have sanctify'd the Festivals, ordain'd to praise G O D, and bewail your past Offences, since you have expected these days, only to augment your Crimes, and please the Devils. Consider, what Honour you have given as well to your natural Parents, as to your spiritual Fathers, who are your Prelates and Superiors, since you have slighted all their Commands, and set all their Laws at defiance : what love you have had for your Neighbour, whom you have so often injur'd, and whose death you have so frequently desir'd for matters of no value, and some insignificant Puntilio of Honour. See, whether you have preserv'd your Body and Soul from all impurity, since you have so many times defil'd your self by your Actions, by your Words, by your Thoughts,

Thoughts, by your Designs, by your voluntary Complacences, and have thus so often dar'd to profane the Temple, which G O D had sanctify'd for himself. Who can here explain the uncleanness and licentiousness of your looks, the impurities, you have conceiv'd in your heart, and those, your mouth has daily utter'd, the excess and pomp of your Clothes, your Walks, your dangerous Conversations, and so many Artifices, as you have made use of to do ill? What shall I say of your Covetousness, and your Theft, since you have esteem'd nothing so much as Money, since you have made it your last End, have ador'd it as your Idol, and given it, what is due to none but G O D alone? Who can express the liberty, you have given to your Tongue, the Obscenities, the Detractions, the Flatteries, the Lyes, the Curses, and the Injuries, that have proceeded from it; since all your Discourses, and all your ordinary Conversations have been nothing else: Having in this manner trac'd, what you have committed against G O D's Commandments, make an exact and serious Reflection on the seven deadly sins, and see with sorrow the share, you have in them. Examine, what has been your Ambition, your Presumption, your Pride, and how many ways you have made it appear both in your words, and in your actions. Call to mind your wrath, your envy, your intemperances, and the delicacy, with which you have pamper'd your Body: Reflect on your dulness and slowness to Good, and the nimbleness, with which you have run after all things, that are Evil. Consider also, in what manner you have perform'd the spiritual and corporal works of Mercy, and how little you have been concern'd at your Neighbours Necessities.

sities, having taken so much care to provide for your own.

And if there is no reasonable Creature, but ought to acknowledge in it self G O D's Benefits, and make use of them according to his intentions, tell me, to what use you have put them. In what have you spent the life, he has given you? How have you employ'd your Wit, your Strength, and the Gifts of Nature, he has endow'd you with? What have you done with all the Wealth and Riches, he has bestow'd on you? You cannot without doubt deny, but you have employ'd them only in vanity, and offending G O D; that of his own Benefits you have made Arms against him; that you have taken occasions to commit the greatest sins from those very things, for which you were oblig'd to do him the greatest services; and that, what ought to have been a powerful motive to make you love G O D above all things, has serv'd you only to offend him with greater Ingratitude. And in fine you will be forc'd to confess, that you have liv'd, as if you ow'd nothing to your G O D, as if you had receiv'd nothing of him, as if you had been your own Creator, and had not any dependance on him. What is there then more reasonable, than that they, who have Eyes to behold these Disorders, and Understanding to comprehend, how far they are stray'd from the right way, should bitterly bewail their unhappiness, and that their Eyes should melt in tears at the sight of so many Evils? Those only are neither sensible of them, nor lament them, who are so blind, as not to see the dreadful ruine, they have brought their Soul to, by the loss of all these true Goods.

§. 2.

Second Consideration. Of what is lost by Sin.

HAVING consider'd the number and quality of your sins, consider also, what they have made you lose: You will thereby see, how great that is, which you have lost, and how often you have lost it. This Motive will perhaps cause in you repentance and sorrow, which can never be advantageous to you, but on this occasion. *St. Chrysostom* says, there is no loss reparable by Tears, but that, which is suffer'd by sin, and that they are never profitably employ'd, but in bewailing it. Make use, Brethren, of this saving Sorrow, and to incline your hearts the more seriously to it, consider with all humility, what is lost by one mortal sin, and you will soon see, that there is nothing, which ought more sensibly to touch you.

The Reasons of it are these. First, by one sole mortal sin is lost the Grace of the Holy Ghost, which is so excellent a Gift, that GOD bestows no greater on any mortal Creature in this life; there are lost also the charity and love of GOD, which are always inseparable from this Grace, and far more considerable than all the Favors of earthly Princes, which men with so much care endeavor to preserve. There are lost also infus'd Vertues, and the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, which adorn and beautifie Souls in the sight of GOD, which arm and strengthen them against the assaults of the Devil; tho Faith and Hope are not always lost. There is lost the right to the inheritance of Heaven, which comes by this Grace: since 'tis Grace, that leads to Glory.
There

There is lost the Gift of spiritual Adoption, which, making us Children of G O D, gives us the heart and mind of Children towards him ; and losing this advantage, we become unworthy to be treated by him with a fatherly affection, and renounce that singular and truly paternal Providence, he exercises over such, as he takes into the number of his Children. There is lost the peace and quiet, given by a good Conscience. There are lost the favors and comforts of the Holy Ghost. There is lost the fruit and merit of all the good works, a man has done during his whole life till this unhappy hour, and with this all the share, a man can pretend to in the riches and benefits of the whole Church, which are not communicated to the sinner in such manner, as when he was in the state of Grace. In fine all these Treasures are lost by one mortal sin, and what a man gains by having committed it, is to see himself condemn'd for ever to the Torments of Hell, to be blotted out of the Book of Life, instead of G O D's Child to become the Devil's Slave, and of the Temple of the most holy Trinity to become a Den of Thieves, and a Retreat for Serpents.

But of all these Losses the most dreadful, and worthiest of our Tears, is the having lost Almighty GOD: for this loss is the root and cause of all the rest. Think on this, Brethren, and know, that to lose G O D, is to cease having him for our Father, our Pastor, and our Protector ; and on the contrary, of a most merciful Father to render him a declar'd Enemy, and a most severe Judge. 'Tis this unhappiness, you ought to lament with Tears of Bloud ; and 'twas of such an one as this, that the Prophet *Osee* said: *Rejoice*

F

not,

Jud. 9. v. 1. not, O Israel, as other people, renounce thy Pleasures: because thou hast committed Fornication against thy GOD. The Host of the Tribe of Dan marching to the Conquest of a City, some Souldiers entred into an house, whence they took away an Idol of Silver; the Master of the house, to whom it belong'd; follow'd them weeping, and when these Souldiers askt him the cause of his Tears, he answer'd them: You carry away my GOD, and do you ask me, why I weep? If this miserable man thought, he had great reason to bewail the loss of his GOD of Metal, which was the work of his own hands; what ought a Christian to do, since he knows, that every time he sins, he loses not a false GOD, which himself has made, but the true GOD, by whom all things were made.

*Jud. 18.
v. 24.*

This great Good, and this chief of all Goods, being lost by one sin, judge, whether 'tis not fit for them heartily to lament, who have lost so precious a Treasure, and see themselves fallen from so many Priviledges, and such an height of Glory, into such an Abyss of Misery. What sorrow and what confusion ought not to seize a Soul, that has thrown it self into so many Calamities? Open your eyes, miserable Soul, says an holy Doctor, and see, what you were, and what you are; where you were, and where you are. You were the Spouse of the most High, the Temple of the living GOD, a chosen Vessel, the Bed of the eternal King, the Throne of the true Solomon, the Seat of Wisdom, the Companion of Angels, and an Inheritrix of Heaven. You had all these Qualities, and as often as I say *You had*, you ought to mourn, that you no longer have them. Is there anything more strange, or more opposit than this Change?

Change? The Spouse of GOD is found to be an Adulteress with *Satan*, the Temple of the Holy Ghost is become a Den of Thieves, the chosen Vessel is chang'd into a Vessel of Corruption, the Bed of JESUS CHRIST into a Sty of unclean Beasts, the Seat of GOD into a Chair of Pestilence, the Companion of Angels has made her self the Fellow of Devils, and she, who heretofore soar'd aloft, even to Heaven, like a Dove, creeps now on Earth, like a Serpent. Bewail your self then, miserable Soul. Mourn, since the Heavens mourn over you, since the Church deplores you, since all the Saints lament for you. *St. Paul* sheds tears for you, because you have sinn'd, and not done Penance. The Prophets weep for you, because GOD's Wrath is ready to break out against you. *Jeremy* sheds more tears for you, than he did for the destruction of *Jerusalem*, seeing the noble City of *Israel* overthrown by the just Wrath of Heaven, and the Daughter of *Sion* to have lost all her Beauty.

2 Cor. 12.

v. ult.

Jer. 22. v. 10.
and Lament.

§. 3.

Third Consideration. Of the Majesty and Goodness of GOD, against whom we sin.

IF you pass farther, and consider the Greatness and Goodness of GOD, against whom you sin, you will find in this Motive far more cause to be afflicted. It cannot be doubted, but that, the greater the Person offended is, the more criminal also is the Offence, which is done unto him: that if this Person be of an infinite Merit, and an infinite Dignity, the Offence, committed a-

gainst him, will be also of the same nature, and consequently of an infinite greatness. Thus the farther you shall penetrate into the Immensity of G O D, the more you will discover the Malice and Enormity of Sin. Lift up then your eyes on high, and see, if you can, the exceeding Majesty of G O D: behold his Riches, his Dignity, his Wisdom, his Beauty, his Glory, his Goodness, his Benignity, his Power, and the Obligations, in which all Creatures are bound to him, and you will thereby in some sort comprehend, how great a Crime it is to have offended him.

But among all the Grandeurs of Almighty G O D, that which ordinarily most touches true Penitents, is his Goodness, particularly when 'tis fully understood, and experiences permit them not to doubt of it. There are many things, that make it known, but there is nothing, in which it so visibly shews it self, as in the Incarnation and Passion of the Son of G O D, and the Institution of the Holy Sacrament, in which he daily offers himself for us, communicates himself to us, and makes his abode in us. Of this Divine Goodness we also often enough perceive particular Marks, we carry in our selves Pledges of it, and certain Assurances in the favorable Entertainments, it is sometimes pleas'd to afford the Elect. It often visits them with such extraordinary Favors, with so much spiritual Light and Joy, that human weakness cannot support them. We find it recorded, that an ancient Father of the Desert, being at Prayer, said: *Lord, stop a little the Torrent of thy Consolations:* and at another time: *Draw back from me, O Lord, for 'tis impossible for me to support the Excess of thy Sweetness.* These are the effects of G O D's Grace, the Favors, Caref-

ses,

S. J. h. Clim.
Gradu 25.

ses, and Liberalities, which the Devout are wont to receive from so redoubted a Greatness, from so extream a Goodness, from so immense a Sweetness, and from so infinite a Mercy: and after all 'tis no great wonder, that this Divine Bounty, who so willingly drank for us the bitter Cup of his Passion, should make us tast with so much sweetness that of his Consolations.

Has not he then, who attentively considers this wonderful Goodness, and at the same time remembers his having so often offended it, just reason to lament, and desire, that all the parts of his Body were turn'd into so many Eyes to bewail his Offences? St. *John Climacus* relates, ^{Gradu 4, & 5.} That one of the ancient Monks, whose Actions he describes, having committed a Fault, askt leave of his Superiour, to enter into the house of Penitents, which they call'd *The Prison*, and that the Superior having granted it, tho' with repugnance enough, because it was but a light offence, and very pardonable; this good Brother felt in his Soul so sharp a sorrow for having sinn'd against so high a Majesty, that in eight days, his heart being mortally pierc'd with grief and love together, he gave up the Ghost to GOD. See Sinners, how great this sorrow must have been, which was able in so short a time to deprive him, that felt it, of his life. In this manner does the regret for sin afflict those, whose Eyes GOD opens to see the greatness of its Malice; and if this holy Penitent was so sensibly toucht for one only sin, committed perhaps without reflecting, on what he did, how great ought to be their sorrow, who have employ'd their whole life only in sinning, and multiplying their offences.

§. 4.

*Fourth Consideration. Of the Injury, done to
G O D by Sin.*

BESIDES what we have already said, consider the extream Injury, Sin does to G O D, and you will see the just cause, you have to grieve for it; for, as often as you sin, you exercise in your heart a sort of Judgment, tho' you perceive it not. On the one side you set before you the benefit of sin, which is the pleasure, you pretend to receive by it; on the other you consider the offence, you commit against G O D, which makes you lose his Friendship. Thus you put in the Balance G O D and your Interest, and you resolve without fear to lose rather the Favor of Almighty G O D, than this miserable Interest.

Can any thing be imagin'd more horrible, or any greater Affront to the Divine Majesty be invented, than to prefer so base and vile a thing before him? This is to imitate the madness of the *Jews*, who, being offer'd their choice of JESUS or *Barabbas*, answer'd, They had rather have that Robber, than JESUS CHRIST: 'Tis, as much as lies in us, to take from G O D the Glory, due to him, as to our last End, and give it to our Interest and our Pleasures. For to set an higher esteem on a fleeting Pleasure, than on G O D, and prefer it before him, is undoubtedly, as much as is in our power, to take the Empire from the Creator, and give it to the Creature. And this is so strange a case, that
G O D

G O D commands the Heavens to be amaz'd at it, saying by the Prophet *Jeremy*: Tremble with astonishment, O ye Heavens: and let your Gates fall down with horror: for my people have committed two great Evils, they have forsaken me, the Fountain of living Water, and sought out broken Cisterns, that can hold no Water. Jer. 2. v. 12, 13.

Consider then, how often you have done this Injury to G O D, and quake for fear. Let your Eyes become Fountains, to bewail day and night so great a Disorder: see, against whom you have sinn'd, and for what you have sinn'd: what you have left, and what you have chosen: what you have lost, and what you have gain'd. Be asham'd now of your self, while it is yet time; and stay not, till you are cover'd for ever with Confusion in the dreadful day of our Lords Judgment,

§. 5.

Fifth Consideration. Of the Hatred, G O D bears to Sin.

Y O U will receive also no small assistance for the acquiring this holy Sorrow, with a strong Hatred against Sin, if you consider attentively that, which G O D bears it. This Hatred is so great, that none can comprehend it; and if of all the created Understandings, there are in the World, were made one only Understanding, and of all the Tongues one only Tongue; yet would not this Understanding be able to conceive, nor this Tongue to express it: for the better a thing is, the more it loves Goodness, and the more it hates Wickedness. Now since 'tis true,

that GOD is not only good, but infinitely good, it thence follows, that he has an infinit love for Good, and an infinit hatred for Evil, and thus he recompenses the one with eternal Glory, and punishes the other with the eternal Torments, and the privation of an infinit Good. It is also certain, that GOD hates sin as much, as it deserves to be hated, that is, proportionably to the deformity, which is in sin: Now since this deformity is infinit, as being against a GOD of infinit Majesty, it follows, that the hatred, GOD bears it, is infinit.

These Reasons are strong, but since Examples are more sensible and touching; to the end you may the better comprehend the quality of this Hatred, I will set before your Eyes some of those great Punishments, with which GOD has in this World chastis'd sin. The Heart is known by the Works, and by the Penalties, GOD has inflicted on sinners, you will conceive the aversion, he has for sin. His Power had form'd nothing so agreeable to his Eyes, as that fair Angel and his Companions, whom he had created to praise him; but for one only sin the highest Creature became the most abominable, and that, which he lov'd most, was the first Object of his Wrath. Can one, without trembling, call to mind the Punishment of the first man, and all his Posterity? that, which GOD laid on the whole World by the Waters of the Deluge? those five famous Towns, he consum'd by Fire from Heaven? the rigor of his Justice and Judgments, which he made appear in punishing the Adultery of *David*, the Disobedience of *Saul*, the Indulgence of *Heli* towards his Children, the Covetousness of *Ananias* and *Saphira*, and the Pride of *Nebuch-*

Nebuchodonosor ? and in fine the greatness and eternity of Hell-Torments, which were created only to punish sin ? But what shall we say of the pains, suffer'd by GOD made man, of that rigorous Chastisement, which the eternal Father inflicted even on his own Son ? This Example is beyond all others, and ought to cause much more fear than those, we have represented, seeing the infinit dignity of the person, on whom this punishment fell.

Consider them then, every one in particular, and in all their circumstances, and be assur'd, you will draw thence a wonderful advantage by the knowledge, they will give you of the dreadful rigor of GOD's Justice, and the perfect hatred, he has against sin. This is the means to excite in your heart the true fear of GOD, and sorrow for your Offences, since 'tis in effect just, you should hate them as much, as GOD himself abhors them. I know, 'tis difficult for you, or any man, to raise the greatness of this sorrow to the pitch, it ought to be at : but detest at least your Crimes as much, as you can, and cease not to beg of GOD, that he would increase your Regret for having offended him : for in this consists the best part of true Penance, and *Christian Justice*.

§. 6.

Sixth Consideration. Of Death, and the things, that follow it.

'TIS also very reasonable, that the calling to mind the pains of Hell, the universal Judgment, and the Judgment at the day of our death, should move us to fear and sorrow for our sin, since each of these things threatens with so great Miseries those, who shall be found guilty, and that they are so much nearer to us, as there is none, but ought to look on the remainder of his Life, as very short. Think then seriously on it, and consider, what you will do, what you will say, when this time shall come, which undoubtedly is not far off. 'Tis then, that all those, who shall have liv'd wickedly, may say with truth: O my Soul, the Hour is now come, that must put an end to thy Pride, to thy Vanity, to thy Follies, and to thy filthy Pleasures, which thou hast lov'd more than GOD, and to which thou hast paid more obedience than to GOD: since thou hast so often for their sakes offended him. Pride, and Vanity, where are you now? Delights and Pleasures, what is become of you? what have you given me, and what have you left in my hands after so many years, as I have serv'd you? I have prefer'd you before eternal life; for you I have lost Heaven, and gain'd Hell: I have lost infinit Benefits, and deserv'd to become for ever a Companion of Devils. What, I say, have you left me for having been so faithful to you, and having for your sakes committed so many Evils? If you must

must then fall into this miserable condition; if your heart must then be prickt with all these Thorns, and your Conscience stung with so much Remorse, and perhaps in vain, why do you not now make your Soul sensibly feel them, when you may do it with profit? Why do you not pronounce a just Condemnation against your selves in this life, that you may not in the next be judg'd by G O D according to the severity of his Justice?

§. 7.

Seventh Consideration. Of G O D's Benefits.

BUT there will be nothing more available for the increasing of this sorrow, than to meditate thoroughly on the greatness and number of G O D's Benefits: for the more you shall consider, how good G O D has been to you, the more confusion you will receive for having been so ungrateful to him. 'Twas by this means, the Prophets often endeavour'd to excite in G O D's People a sorrow for their offences, and 'twas by this consideration, the Prophet *Nathan* began to aggravate the heinousness of *David's* sin, having, before he reprehended him for his Adultery, reminded him of all the Benefits and Favours, he had receiv'd of Almighty G O D.

To make use now of the same Remedy, call diligently to mind, whatever G O D's goodness has done for you. Remember, that *he* is he, who has created you, who has kept you, who has redeem'd you, that by his Grace you have been baptiz'd, you have been call'd, you have receiv'd good

good Inspirations, you have been preserv'd from many Evils, and have in fine had a multitude of Benefits bestow'd on you. If you weigh these things in a just Balance, you will find, that whatsoever the Heavens include, and whatsoever the Earth contains, are Benefits, proceeding from him: that all the Members and Senses, which compose your Body, are so many of his Gifts: that all the Moments, you breath, are so many Favors, you receive from his hand: that the Bread, you eat, the Earth, you walk on, the Sun, which lights you, the Heavens, which encompass you, and whatever serves for the entertainment of your Life, are Presents, that he makes you. And in fine to comprehend all in one word, all the Good and Evil in the World are his Benefits, since he created all this Good for you, and has preserv'd you from the greatest part of this Evil, it being certain, that no Misery is suffer'd by one man, which another may not undergo.

Is there any thing then, you ought to be more sensible of, than your having liv'd in such a forgetfulness of this G O D, who has carry'd you as it were in his Arms, whose Goodness has given you Subsistence, whose Spirit has given you Life, whose Sun has warm'd you, whose Providence has govern'd you; and finally, in whom, and by whom you move, live, and have your Being? Can there be any greater Crime, than to have persever'd so long in offending that G O D, who, even during all your disorders, never ceas'd to do you good? or any greater Blindness, than the deriving paid so many Favors with so strange Ingratitude?

But moreover, can any Malice go higher, than this despising a G O D, who having cloath'd himself

himself with a Body, made for you so many Journeys, sustain'd so many Fasts, shed so many Tears, offer'd so many Prayers, suffer'd so many Injuries, underwent so many Labours, receiv'd so many Affronts, and bore such insupportable sorrows? 'Tis certain, that Sins brought all these Miseries upon him, that he accepted them, and would bear them, partly to satisfy for them, and partly to shew us, how much he hates them, since he did so much to destroy them. Thus you see, what cause you have to melt into Tears, when you reflect, how often by your sins you have afresh buffeted, scourg'd, and crucify'd your Saviour, who endur'd all this for you. Consider on the one side that invincible Patience, and prodigious Mercy of G O D towards you, and on the other your Ingratitude towards him, and being plung'd into a Sea of Sorrow, say to him the following words.

C H A P. IV.

*A Prayer, to stir up in the Soul Compunction,
and Sorrow for her Sins.*

O Thou only begotten Son of G O D, such are the Benefits, I have receiv'd from thee, that I want words to express them. Thou hast drawn me out of the dust and mire of the Earth: thou hast of nothing created my Soul after thy Image, and made me capable of thy Glory. Thou hast given me Understanding, Memory, Will, free Choice, with all the
Parts

Parts of my Body, and all the Senses belonging to it ; to the end I might make use of them to know and love thee. Thou hast born with me even to this hour after so many sins, whereas so many others, less criminal than I, suffer now perhaps the pains of Hell, because thou hast not expected them with the same patience. Not content with these Mercies, thou wouldst for my sake be made man, and converse with men ; for me thou wouldst feel a mortal agony and sorrow : thou wouldst be bath'd in a bloody Sweat, be taken, bound, buffeted, spit upon, injur'd, despis'd, blasphem'd, and sometimes in mockery cloth'd with a red, sometimes with a white Garment for me : for me thou wouldst be torn with Whips, crown'd with Thorns, beaten with a Reed, have thine Eyes bound, be condemn'd as a Criminal, bear a Cross on thy shoulders to the place of thy punishment, and be there fastned to it with Nails : in this infamous place thou wouldst be set between two Thieves, as if thou hadst been one of the Wicked, wouldst have for the easing of thy Thirst only Vinegar and Gall ; and in fine wouldst lose thy life in that deplorable condition.

In this manner, O my Lord, and with suffering such terrible Torments, didst thou vouchsafe to redeem me ; and yet I, who am but a Worm of the Earth, and a miserable Sinner, have dar'd to give thee as many Buffets, and crucifie thee afresh as many times, as I have committed sins, which ought to make all Creatures with Justice rise up against me, to revenge the Injuries of their Creator.

But how can I sufficiently accuse my self of the ill use, I have made of thy Sacraments, those
sacred

sacred Remedies, which thou with thy own Bloud preparedst for me? Thou hast wash'd me, and receiv'd me to be thine, in the Waters of Baptism? Herein thou hast adopted me to be one of thy Children, thou hast consecrated me as thy Temple, thou hast anointed me as a King, as a Priest, and as a Souldier, that ought continually to fight against thy Enemy. In this Sacrament thou hast chosen my Soul for thy Spouse, and adorn'd it with all the Ornaments, befitting so high a Dignity. What have I done with all this Wealth, thou bestow'dst on me, and what use have I made of all these Benefits? Thou mad'st me thy Son, and I have made my self the Slave of Sin: thou form'dst me to be thy Temple, and I have made my self an Habitation for Devils: Thou list'dst me for one of thy Souldiers, and I have run over to thy Enemies side: Thou rais'dst me to the dignity of a King, and I have rebell'd against thee with the Kingdom, which thou gavest me: Thou espous'dst my Soul on condition, I should bear thee an endless Love, and I have lov'd Vanity more than Truth, and the Creature more than the Creator.

It were fit, O my Lord, that finding my self guilty of so many Crimes, I should have begun to lament; this is a Tribute, I owe thee, and which thou hast almost as long a time expected of me, as has past, since thou gav'st me life to incline me to it: thou hast so often call'd me, and so long born with me: thou hast sometimes stirr'd me up to it by thy Punishments, and sometimes invited me by thy Caresses, and hast left no means untry'd, to draw me to thee. When thou wait'dst for me, I abus'd thy patience; when thou call'dst me, I was deaf to thy voice: Thou gav'st

gav'st me time to do Penance, and I employ'd it to confirm my self in my Pride: Thou struck'st me, and I felt it not: Thou afflicted'st me, and I made not the use, I ought to do, of thy Chastisements: Thou took'st great pains to purifie me, and with all thy labour even Fire was not capable to cleanse my Filth, nor scour away the Rust of my Vices. I equally hardned my self against thy Punishments, and thy Favors: shewing on the one side my stubbornness, and on the other my ingratitude. But in fine, O Lord, since thou hast done so many things for me, and commandest us never to lose Confidence in thy Goodness, I wholly refer my self to thy Mercy, and most humbly beg of thee Grace to lead a new Life, that I may henceforth in such manner please, and serve thee, that I may never hereafter be separated from thee. *Amen.*

CHAP. V.

Another Prayer, to beg Pardon for our Sins.

O Sovereign Creator of all things, when I revolve in my mind, how much my sins have offended thee, I wonder at my folly; seeing, that I have forsaken so good a Father, I accuse my Ingratitude; and perceiving, that from so noble a liberty, as I enjoy'd, I am fallen into so miserable a slavery, I condemn my imprudence, and can set nothing before my Eyes, but Hell and Judgment, in the dread I have of thy Justice, from which I cannot conceal my self.

But

But if on the contrary I consider thy great Mercy, which (according to the testimony of thy Prophet) *surpasses all thy other Works*; then does Psal. 144. v. 9. a pleasing air of Hope come to refresh me, and brings strength and comfort to my Soul. For how can I despair to obtain pardon of him, who has so often by the mouth of his Prophets invited Sinners to do Penance, saying: *I will not the death of a sinner, but that he be converted, and live.* Ezech. 33. v. 11. Moreover, what Expressions has not thy Son us'd, and what Comparisons has he not employ'd, to let us see, that thou art always ready to pardon those, who are toucht with a true Repentance? This he signify'd to us by that precious Stone, which was lost, and found again; and by the Mat. 18. v. 12. &c. stray'd Sheep, that the Shepherd brought home on his shoulders. But much more expressly did he set it forth in the Parable of the Prodigal Child, whose Image I manifestly bear: for I am Luk. 15. v. 11. &c. usq; ad finem. in effect that Son, who with so little reason went away from a Father, which so tenderly lov'd me; who have so unfortunately squander'd away my Estate; who, instead of submitting to thy sweet Yoke, have unworthily subjected my self to the Law of my Passions; who am by this means fallen into the intolerable bondage of sin; whence there is no way for me to get out, but by him, whom I have forsaken and offended.

Let thy Mercy then, O Lord, receive this Wretch, who begs thy pardon, and whom thou hast with so much patience and sweetness even to this hour expected. I am not worthy to lift up my Eyes towards thee, or to call thee my Father; but thou hast goodness enough to look down upon me, because thou truly art a Father: 'tis this Look alone, that raises the Dead, 'tis this

G

Look,

Look, that causes those, who are lost, to return to themselves: and I am very certain, 'twould have been impossible for me to have the sorrow, I now feel, if thou hadst not beheld me. When I had miserably lost my self by straying from thee, thou from the height of Heaven looktst down upon me, and open'dst my Eyes, that I might see my self, and know the Evils, of which I was full: now thou com'st before me, putting me in mind, what it is to have lost Innocency. I desire neither thy Embraces, nor thy Kisses, of which I am unworthy; I request not the rich Garments, with which I was wont to be clad, nor the Ring, that shew'd my dignity; I ask thee not to receive me, as thy Child: 'twill be an exceeding happiness for me, if thou please to take me into the number of thy Slaves, if thou brand'st me with thy Iron, and bind'st me with thy Chains, that I may no more fly from thee. It shall never grieve me to pass my life in thy house as one of the least of thy Servants, provided I may never be separated from thee. Hear me then, O Father of Mercies, grant me some share in the favor of thy only Son, and make me feel the Remedy of his Death. Give me thy Spirit, to purify my Heart, and strengthen it in thy Love, that I may no more return into this deplorable banishment, out of which I have been recall'd by thy goodness, who livest and reignest, World without end. *Amen.*

Another

Another Prayer, to beg Pardon for our Sins.

If you desire to obtain true Contrition, and consequently the Remission of your Sins, I advise you for some days to read this Prayer with the greatest Attention, you can: you will see therein, how exceedingly you are oblig'd to Almighty G O D, and how great your Repentance ought to be for having offended so high a Majesty.

WH O will give Water to my Head, and Fountains of Tears to my Eyes, that I may both night and day bewail my sins, and my ingratitude to Almighty G O D? There are many things, O my Lord, which may bring Sinners to the knowledge of their sins; but I find nothing so efficacious, as to consider the greatness of thy Goodness, and the multitude of thy Benefits, even towards sinners themselves. Wherefore, to the end my Soul may by this means accuse and confound her self, I will relate some part of thy Benefits, and some part of my Wickedness: that it may by this Comparison more clearly appear, what thou art, and what I am; what thou hast been towards me, and what I have been towards thee.

There was a time, when I was not, thou gav'st me Being, thou drew'st me out of the dust of the Earth, and mad'st me after thy Image. *From Psal. 139. v. 1.*
my Mothers womb thou art my G O D: since from
 the beginning of my Creation even to this very hour, thou hast been my Father, my Saviour, my Protector, and all my Good. Thou form'dst my Body with all its Senses, thou createdst my Soul

with all her powers, and thou hast even to this day preserv'd my life by a particular benefit of thy Providence. All this appear'd but little to thy Liberality, tho' in it self 'twas very much, since 'twas all; but because all these Benefits cost thee nothing, to oblige me the more unto thee, thou wouldst give me something, that cost thee an infinite price. Thou cam'st down from Heaven to Earth: Thou foughtst me in the ways, wherein I had lost my self: Thou enobledst my Nature, by taking my Humanity: Thou deliver'dst me from Captivity by making thy self a Prisoner: Thou plucktst me out of the power of the Devil by putting thy self into the hands of Sinners: and thou destroy'dst my sin by clothing thy self with the Similitude of a Sinner. Thou wouldst oblige me by this Grace, fill me with Love by this Benefit, strengthen my Hope by these Merits, and cause in me an horror of sin by shewing me, what thou didst to destroy it. Thou throw'st burning Coals on the dead Coals of my heart, that by the great number of Favors, included in this one Benefit, I might in fine love him, who has done so much for me, and shewn me so much love.

Thus, O Lord, wast thou pleas'd to redeem me: but what would it have avail'd me to be redeem'd, if I had not been baptiz'd? Amongst so many Infidels, of which the whole World is full, thou wast pleas'd to make me one of thy Faithful, and put me in the number of those, whose Happiness is so great, as to become thy Children, when they are regenerated in the Waters of Baptism. There was I receiv'd to be thine; there, was that wonderful Alliance made, that thou shouldst be my G O D, and I should be thy
Servant;

Servant ; that thou shouldst be my Father, and I should be thy Child ; that, as thou wouldst never cease exercising the actions of a Father over me, I should also, during my whole life, pay thee the Respects and Obedience of a Child. All this was done in Baptism, not to mention the other Sacraments, which thou hast instituted for a Remedy of my Miseries, not being willing to apply any other Medicine to my Wounds, but the precious Blood of thine.

In the mean time my Malice has been so great, that, notwithstanding all this assistance, I have lost this first Grace of Innocence ; and thy Mercy has been so abundant, that thou hast to this very hour forborn me. O my only Hope, and sole Refuge, how can I without tears call to mind, how often, during this so ill-employ'd time, Death might have surpriz'd me, and yet I was preserv'd ? How many thousand Souls are now perhaps burning in Hell for less Offences than I have committed ? What would have become of me, if thou hadst then taken me hence, as thou didst so many others ? What Judgment ought I not to have expected, if Death had seiz'd me with the Theft in my hand, and thy Justice had found me in the very action, that made me criminal ? Who ty'd its hands at that moment ? Who spake to thee for me, when I was asleep ? Who stay'd thy Indignation, and my Punishment, at such time as I provok'd the one, and deserv'd the other ? What didst thou see in me, that rendred me more considerable to thy Eyes, than so many other Sinners, whom Death took away in the midst of the heats and dangers of their Youth ? My sins lifted up their voice against me, and thou seem'dst not to hear them : my Ma-

lice increas'd every day against thee, and thou daily prolong'dst the term of thy Mercy. I daily sinn'd, and thou daily expectedst; I fled, and thou soughtst me; I was almost weary'd and tir'd with offending thee, and thou wast not weary of bearing with me: and as if my sins had been Services, and not Offences, in the midst of my greatest disorders, I receiv'd from thee many good Inspirations and amorous Corrections, which condemn'd them, on purpose only to make me return to my Duty. How frequently didst thou call me? How often didst thou make me hear thy voice in the bottom of my heart, saying to me: *Thou hast abandon'd thy self to as many Corruptions, as thou wouldst, yet return to me, and I will receive thee?* Thou flatter'dst me with words of love, and terrify'dst me with wholsom Fears and Threats; putting me in mind of the dangers of Death, and the rigor of thy Justice. How many Preachers hast thou sent to stir me up by their Word, how many Confessors to assist me by their Counsel? How often not only by words, but by works, hast thou taken the pains to pursue me, endeavoring (as an Hunter who follows his Game) to prevent me, sometimes by Benefits, sometimes by Punishments, that I might not escape from thee?

Jer. 3.
v. 1.

Psal. 115.
v. 12.

What therefore can I render to thee, O Lord, for all thy Benefits and Favors? I owe thee all, that I am, because thou alone hast created me: I am indebted to thee for all my Being and Life, because 'tis thou alone, that preserv'st me. But what can I give thee for having given thy self for me? If I had all the Lives of Men, and Angels, and should offer them up all in Sacrifice to thee, what would all this be towards the recompensing one

one of those drops of Bloud, which thou hast shed for my Salvation? Who will then give Tears to my Eyes, that I may bewail my wretchedness, and blindness, which have hindred me from acknowledging so many Benefits? Help me now, O Lord, and give me thy Grace, to the end I may accuse my self; and *confess my injustice against me.* How unhappy soever I am, I am nevertheless thy Creature, made after thy Image: Acknowledge, O Lord, this Figure, which is thine; remove from me, and thou wilt find, what thy own hand has made. I confess, I have employ'd all my Forces to offend thee, and made use of the work of thine own hands against thee: My Feet have run after Iniquity, my hands have been open'd to Covetousness, my Eyes have been gazing after nothing but Vanity, and my Ears always attentive to hearken after Lyes. That most noble part of my Soul, which had Eyes to see, has turn'd them away from beholding thy Beauty, and fixt them only on that fading lustre, which accompanies this miserable Life: That, which should have been continually meditating in thy Law and thy Commandments, has been busi'd day and night in nothing else, but seeking opportunities to break them. And if this has been the Employment of my Understanding, what is to be thought of my Will? Thou offer'dst it the Delights of Heaven, it has chang'd Heaven for Earth, and open'd the Heart, which thou hadst consecrated for thy self; to the love of Creatures. This has been, O Lord, my Acknowledgment of thy Benefits, and this is the Fruit, that the Senses, which thou hast created, have brought forth: What then can I answer, when entring into Judgment with me, thou shalt

Psal. 31.
v. 5.

Jer. 2 v. 21.
Isai 5. v. 2.

say to me : *I had chosen thee to be my well-beloved Vineyard, I had planted thee with the choicest Vine, how then art thou turned, and what has made thee so wild?*

If thy reproaching me, with what thou didst for me, when thou createdst me, is sufficient to strike me dumb ; what shall I be able to answer, when thou shalt represent to me the care, thou hast taken to preserve me? Thou hast preserv'd, O Lord, by thy admirable Providence him, who has made it his whole study to contemn thy Law, to persecute thy Servants, to scandalize thy Church, and to fortifie the Kingdom of sin against thee. Thou hast mov'd the Tongue, that blasphem'd thee, thou hast govern'd the Members, that offended thee, and thou hast maintain'd him, who at thy cost serv'd thy Enemies. For I have not only repay'd thy Benefits with Ingratitude ; but have of these very Benefits made Arms to fight against thee : Thou hast appointed all Creatures to serve me ; I have made them my Mistresses, I have infamously committed Adultery with them all, since I have so often offended thee with them : I have lov'd the Gifts more, than the Giver : The lustre, I saw in them, blinded me. I kept my Eyes and Mind fixt to that, whereas their beauty should have serv'd only as a means to raise me to the knowledge of thine ; and to make me comprehend, how the Creator must be incomparably fairer than his Creature. Thou hast given me all things, which are in the World, that I might give my self to thee ; I have appropriated them to my self, and have never rendred thee either the Glory, or the Tribute, that I ought : They have been perfectly obedient to thee, doing me all the services, which thou hadst pre-

prescrib'd them; and I for my part have always offended him; by whose order all things set themselves to serve me: Thou gav'st me Health, and the Devil carry'd away the Fruit of it: Thou gav'st me Strength, and I employ'd it for thy Enemy.

What shall I yet say of another of my Ingratitudes? I have seen all the labors and miseries, with which other men were afflicted; yet have they not been sufficient to make me understand, that all these Calamities, which beset others, were so many Benefits to me: since thou hadst the goodness to preserve me from them. Owe we not an acknowledgment to the least of men, that has done us good? And art thou, O my GOD, only he, whose Favors it is lawful to forget? If Benefits have heretofore tam'd the fierceness of Lions and Serpents, how comes it, that thine have so far won my heart, as to oblige me to say with the Prophet: *Let us fear and respect the Lord, that sendeth us rain from Heaven in his season, and gives us good things in abundance every year.* JER. 5. v. 24.

Thy bearing, O Lord, with such an one, as I am, was sufficient to shew, what thou art, nor was it necessary to give me any further testimonies of thy Goodness: and if thou mayst with Justice require from me a strict account of these things, which cost thee not much, thou mayst with more Rigor exact one from me of those, which made thee so liberally shed thy Blood. I have thwarted all thy purposes, and as much, as lay in me, rendred useles all the Mystery of thy Incarnation. Thou mad'st thy self man, to make me in some sort a GOD by the participation of thy Nature; and I thro' a disorderly love of mine own vileness, have rankt my self among
Beasts,

Beasts, and made my self a Child of the Devil: Thou cam'st down to Earth, to raise me to Heaven, and as I merited not that Favor, so I minded it not, taking more pleasure to continue wallowing in my Filth and Mire: Thou hadst set me at liberty; and I have of my self return'd into Bondage: Thou gav'st me Life; and I have again given my self Death: Thou mad'st me one of thy Members; and I was not afraid to unite my self with the Devil. Neither did so many Benefits suffice to make me know thee; nor so many extraordinary Marks of thy Love to make me love thee; nor so many Obligations to make me hope in thee; nor so rigorous a Justice, exercis'd over thy self, to make me fear thee. Thou humbledst thy self even to the dust of the Earth; and my Pride was never in the least abated: Thou stoodst naked on the Cross, and the World suffices not my Covetousness: Thou, who art a GOD, suffredst thy self to be buffeted, and I, who am but a Worm of the Earth, cannot endure so much as the Hem of my Garment to be toucht.

But I am yet constrain'd to my confusion to observe the utmost point, at which my Ingratitude and Malice could arrive: The Mercy and Love, it pleas'd thee to exercise towards me, were so exceeding, that thou wouldst dy thy self, to make sin dy in me; and I have presum'd to offend thee on the confidence, I had in this Mercy. What greater Impiety than this can be committed? I have taken occasion from thy goodness to persevere in my wickedness: The very same means, thou mad'st use of to destroy sin, has been to me a Motive of sinning; thus have I frustrated thy Designs, mockt thy Counsels, and made all thy Bounties serve to execute the inventions of
of

of my Malice: because thou art so good, I imagin'd, that I might be wicked; and because thou hadst already bestow'd on me so many Benefits, I concluded, that I might commit against thee great offences. By so detestable a conclusion I fell into this error, to behold the Remedy, thou ordain'dst against Sin, as an Encouragement to sin with more liberty; and to employ those Arms to destroy my own life, which thou gav'st me, to fight against my Enemies. In fine thou wouldst dy, to render thy self that way Lord of the Living and the Dead, and to the end *that they, which live, may not now live to themselves, but to thee, who dy'dst for them.* 2 Cor. 5. v. 15. And I, like a true Child of *Jezabel*, have taken occasion from thy death to spoil thee of thy Goods; I have run away from thy service, and made my self a Slave to thy Enemy. What punishment does not such a Crime deserve? If *Dogs* devour'd the Flesh of this Queen for such a sin, how comes it, that my Body is yet whole? And if the Apostle forms a strong Argument to demonstrate the Malice of mans heart, from its taking occasion of the Law to break the Law, is it not a far greater wickedness to take occasion of Grace to overthrow the same Grace? O Lord, I adore thy Patience in suffering thy self to be buffeted by the hands of Sinners; but there is much more cause to wonder at thy bearing with me, and such other Sinners, as I am. Rom. 7. v. 13. &c.

But what appearance of Hope is there, that this Patience is not tir'd? I see, what thou sayst in thy Prophets: *I have held my peace, I have always kept silence, I have suffer'd much; but now I will cry out, like a woman in travel.* Isai. 42. v. 14. I know, that the Earth, which brings not forth Fruit, after it has

has been water'd by the Rain, is curs'd, and that the Vineyard, which, after it has been carefully cultivated, instead of good Grapes, brings forth only such, as are sowr and wild, is destroy'd and laid wast by thy Command. How then, Sinner, who mayst be compar'd to a dry and wither'd Branch, didst not thou fear the terrible voice of that Husbandman, who cuts off from the Vine the fruitless sprigs, and casts them into the Fire? Where was my Prudence not to apprehend so formidable a Judgment? Where were my Ears, that they heard not these words? and what dead sleep was I in, that I awoke not at the Thundring of these Threats? I plac'd all my Content in continuing on the Earth, I lov'd an abode, so unworthy the Soul, which GOD has given me, and I made it my delight to be amongst the Thorns; I was burnt with the fire of my Passions, I was stung with the points of my Desires, I was torn in pieces by the distraction of my Thoughts, I felt the continual gnawings of the Worm of my Conscience; and in this miserable condition I foolishly thought my self at rest, I imagin'd, that I enjoy'd Peace in the midst of this cruel War, and perceiv'd not, that I was a senseless fool in not knowing my self, and a Rebel in departing from thy service.

What then, O my GOD, will become of me? alas! what must I do? I truly know, that I deserve not to appear before thee, or to lift up my Eyes to behold thee: But whither shall I go? where can I hide my self from thee? Art not thou my Father, and the Father of Mercies? Thus, tho I have ceas'd to act, as a Child; thou hast not left off to treat me as a Father: and tho I have committed all, that can contribute to my Condemnation; thou hast still in thee all, that

is

is requisite for my Salvation. I can then do nothing, but throw my self at thy feet, and humbly beg thy mercy: I can call upon none, but thee, from none, but thee, can I expect relief: for 'tis thou, that hast created me, that hast form'd me, that hast redeem'd me, that hast preserv'd me: Thou art my King, my Pastor, my Priest, and my Sacrifice: And thus, O Lord, if thou putst me away, who will receive me? if thou forsak'st me, who will protect me? Acknowledge, O Lord, this stray'd Sheep, which returns to thee: if I am wounded, thou canst heal me; if I am blind, thou canst give me sight; nay, were I dead, thou canst raise me again, and if I am filthy, thou canst cleanse me: *Thou shalt sprinkle* Psal. 50. v. 8. *me, O Lord, with Hyssop, and I shall be cleans'd: Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than Snow.* Thy Mercy is greater than my Offence, thy Goodness exceeds my Malice, and thou canst pardon more sins, than I can commit. Look not therefore upon me with disdain, nor consider the multitude of my Offences, but the multitude of thy Mercies: who livest and reignest World without end. *Amen.*

CHAP. VI.

*Of the wonderful Fruits, that follow true
Contrition.*

THese, Brethren, are the Considerations and Prayers, that may help us to obtain this so important Grace of Contrition: I have stay'd the longer upon them, because this part is the Foundation, and as it were the Key of all the rest, that compose Penance. You ought therefore to read these things with the greatest Devotion, you can: you ought to retire into a quiet and silent place, and chuse a time, fit for that purpose: for, as it often happens, that one, who begins to pray without Devotion, finds it in praying: so it may also fall out, that, as you are reading some of these Prayers, or meditating on some of these Considerations, I propose to you, without Contrition, GOD may give it you in the midst of your Prayer. St. *Luke* teaches us, that our Lord was transfigur'd, whilst he was praying: Thus great Changes are often wrought in Prayer, GOD many times granting at the last, what he does not at the first: and therefore 'tis not without reason ordinarily said, That the End of Prayer is better than the Beginning.

If it happens then, that the Penitent by one of these means, or any other, enters into a true Contrition, at the same time the Grace of the Holy Ghost is restor'd to him, and it may be said, that from that very moment this blessed Spirit is
given

Luke 9.
v. 29.

given him for a Guest, a Director, and a Governor, who will, like a wise Pilot, securely steer his Life thro' the midst of this tempestuous Sea. He is then united by Charity to JESUS CHRIST, as a living Member of its Head, and by this admirable Union made partaker of the influences of his Grace, of his Merits, of his Death, and of his Life: He is then receiv'd and adopted for a Child of GOD, he becomes an Inhabiter of his Kingdom, GOD treats him as a true Son, making him feel all those Effects of his Care and Providence, which he usually grants them, whom he raises to this illustrious Quality. Then this Father, full of Goodness, receives into his House his Son, that was lost, causing him to be cloath'd with the white Robe, which signifies Innocence, and giving him the Ring of Wisdom, that is, a new Knowledge of heavenly things, which are hid from the Eyes of the World. Luke 15.
v. 22.

Then the Heavens rejoyce, the Angels sing Praises to GOD, and all the celestial Kingdom blesses that happy day, which restores to them a banisht Citizen; and all Creatures which were before afflicted for the offence, done to GOD, and the loss of their Fellow-Creature, leap for joy, and sound forth after their manner a Song of Mirth, to see this Loss so advantageously repair'd: but above all, this good Shepherd, who has with so great pains sought his stray'd Sheep, and brought him home on his shoulders, makes his satisfaction appear: Then he calls together all his Friends, and Neighbours, saying to them: *Rejoyce with me, because I have found my Sheep, that was lost.* Luke 15.
v. 6.

You will in the mean time observe, that the greater the Penitents Humility and Contrition are,

are, the better they prepare him also for a more eminent Grace, and for the receiving greater Mercies: for as the design'd height of a Building may be conceiv'd by the low laying of its Foundations, and as we see, that a Tree shoots up so much higher into the Air, as it takes root deeper into the Earth: so when GOD gives men a more profound Humility, and a more lively horror of their wicked Life, 'tis a great sign, that he disposes them for a more than ordinary Grace.

Psal. 88.
v. 11.

Justice and Judgment are, as the Prophet says, *the Supporters of GOD's Throne:* 'Tis Judgment, that examines the Cause, and Justice, that executes the Sentence. The Soul of the Sinner exercises these Functions in her self: she resents at first with confusion the Evil, she has committed, which was to despise the Creator for love of the Creature: and afterward she pronounces against her self her own Judgment, acknowledging it to be just, that he, who has dishonor'd GOD, should humble himself, dishonor himself, and abase himself even to the dust of the Earth; and that he, who has taken extraordinary Delight in Creatures, should exceedingly lament, and severely chastise himself, to do Penance for his vain Pleasures. 'Tis thus, a Soul renders her self the Throne of GOD, and becomes the Palace, in which the Divine Wisdom is pleas'd to make its Abode. St. Bernard says, that GOD makes use of Fear and Love, as of two Feet, for to enter into a Soul; he first sets in that of Fear, and afterward that of Love: so that the greater the Fear is, which begins, the greater the Love is, that follows. Our Lord, according to the Language of the Prophet, *mortifieth and quickneth, bringeth down to hell, and fetcheth back again.* And this

1 Kin. 2.
v. 6.

this is the order, most frequently kept by this sovereign Lord, who, after a Soul has conceiv'd so great a sorrow and fear for her Offences, that she seems, as it were, already swallow'd up in Hell, draws her back by his Mercy, and raises her up again, giving her as many comforts, as she has suffer'd griefs and torments in her heart.

Thus, when your Soul shall be troubled, when she shall be shaken with these terrors, do not lose courage, but on the contrary know, that then a strong Medicine is given you, to the end you may become more healthy; that you are wash'd in scalding Water, to the end you may be more clean; and that you are laid on burning Coals, to the end you may be purify'd from the filth and rust, you had contracted. 'Twill then be fit for you to raise your voice to GOD with the Prophet, saying: *O Lord, thou hast moved the Earth, and hast shaken it, heal the breaches thereof, because it is moved.* And then will you experiment in your self, what the same Prophet adds: *The Earth trembled, and was still, when GOD arose to give Judgment.* For as soon as being mov'd by GOD, you shall have pronounc'd against your self the Judgment, we have mention'd, the fear of divine Justice will not fail to seize your Soul; but this Labor will soon be succeeded by Rest, with the confidence and peace, which our Lord gives those, to whom he shews mercy: 'tis he, that by his Spirit of Judgment, and by his Spirit of Fire, washes away the stains of the Daughters of *Sion*, and takes from the midst of them the Bloud, which defil'd them, striking at first a terror into Souls by the first, that is, by the Fear of his Justice, and afterwards comforting them by the second, that is, by Confidence

H in

Psalm 59.
v. 2.

Psalm 75.
v. 8, 9.

Isaiah 4. v. 4.

3 Kin. 19.

in his Mercy. *Elias* heard first a Noise, an Earthquake, and a violent Whirlwind, which overthrew Mountains; but this Tempest was follow'd by a Gentle Wind, in which GOD made himself known.

Exod. 19.

A. 2. 2.

Isai. 61.
v. 1, 2, 3.

This is the most usual manner, in which GOD works the Conversion of Souls, and this is the same, he observ'd for the Sanctification of the World: He gave it first the Law, and after the Law, the Gospel: and thus the Soul ought to find in her self before all things the Effect and Rigor of the Law, and afterwards the Peace and Comfort of the Gospel. The property of the Law is to frighten, as was signify'd by the Terrors, with which it was given on Mount *Sinai*; but the property of the Gospel is to bring Comfort and Courage, as it hapned, when GOD sent the Holy Ghost to the Apostles on Mount *Sion* in the day of *Pentecost*. Whoever will come to this Mountain, must pass by the other, that is, whoever pretends to obtain the Spirit of Love, must feel the Spirit of Fear: and whoever aspires to the Comforts of the Gospel, must first undergo the Rigors of the Law. How happy is the Soul, that finds her self thus dispos'd. To her, are promis'd all the Graces and Riches of the Gospel, as *Isaiab* signify'd, when speaking in the person of our Saviour, he said thus: *The Spirit of the Lord is in me, because he hath anointed me with his Grace: he hath sent me to preach unto the meek, for to heal those whose Hearts are wounded, to declare Redemption to the Captives, and Liberty to the Prisoners; to comfort the afflicted, and give courage to them, that mourn in Sion, to give them a Crown instead of Ashes, and the Oil of Joy instead of mourning, and a Garment of Praises instead of the Spirit of Sorrow.*

Sorrow. See here, how many Comparisons the Holy Ghost uses, to express on one side the effects of the Law and Penance; and on the other those of the Gospel and Grace, and how the one are promis'd by the other. 'Tis then certain, that to enter into JESUS CHRIST's Palace, and into his rich Cellars, where are the delicious Wines of the true *Solomon*, we must pass thro' Affliction, thro' Labor, and thro' Penance; and that whoever proposes any other way, is a Deceiver. Endeavor with the Spouse to get upon the Mountain of Myrrh, that is, of Bitterness, of Sorrow, and of Mortification, and you shall not fail to hear afterward the words, which the Wise man adds: *Thou art all fair, my beloved, and there is no spot in thee.* Cant. 4. v. 7.

'Tis true, GOD does not always keep this order, but sometimes prevents with the sweetness of his Blessings those, he will draw to him, lest the austerity of Penance, and the strokes of Despair may make them retire and shrink back: but it also ordinarily happens, that, after they have been strengthened by such evident pledges of his Mercy, he puts into their Souls bitter Regrets for their Offences, which are follow'd by this great Peace, and this Consolation, we have spoken of. This is, what GOD teaches by his Prophet, when he says: *I will give her suck, I will lead her into the Desert, and will speak to her heart; I will give her the Valley of Achor, that is, of Trouble, to open to her the way of hope; and she shall sing there, as she sang in the days of her youth.* This shews, that, when GOD uses this Conduct, he begins by the sweetness of spiritual Delights, that he afterwards gives the Valley of Achor, that is, Trouble, and the bitterness of

Contrition ; but that in a short time succeed Sons of Youth, that is, the Joys of the Soul, which pours her self forth in Praises, seeing in her self the marks, G O D gives her of his Love, which are so many Pledges of the Marriage, he will contract with her, and First-fruits of his Glory.

Cant. 2.

'Tis also of very great importance to take notice, that our Lord, in raising a Soul from a common Grace to an higher, often observes the same order, he kept in bringing her to change her life, and pass from Sin to Grace: for having a design to draw her to great things, he disposes her for this state by Groans and Desires, by Sorrows and Fears, and fills her not with his Gifts, till after he has try'd her in Spirit and Body, by many labors and pains. He will have this rainy and stormy Winter to precede both the Flowers of the Spring, and the Fruits of the Summer, which are the Gifts and Graces, that he prepares for his Friends ; and the greater the Favors are, he reserves for them, the sharper also usually are the Sorrows, that go before them. Let none therefore be dismay'd, when he sees himself in this condition, on the contrary let him look on it, as an Assurance of G O D's Goodness, and of the Graces, he will bestow on him.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Second Part of Penance, which is Confession, and of seven things, that are to be observ'd in it.

WE have explain'd the first Part of Penance, which consists in Contrition of Heart: Let us now come to the second, which regards Confession of Sins. Few People confess, as they ought, and to perform this Duty well, when the Penitent shall have done his utmost endeavor, to excite in his Soul a true Contrition according to the Rules, we have set down, he must observe, what follows.

§. I.

Of the Care, that is to be taken in examining our Conscience.

THE first thing is, that, before any one presents himself to Confession, he take time to examine his Conscience, and exact of his Memory a faithful Account of all his past sins, especially if it be long, since he has been at Confession. A wise Doctor says, that this is to be done with all the care, and diligence, the discreetest men use in affairs of the greatest importance; and in truth, I know not any more considerable, or of greater consequence.

I.
ADVICE.

H 3

This

This preparation is so necessary, that, if it should be wanting, the Confession would be null, unless the Confessor should by prudently interrogating the Penitent, supply this default: as it would also be, if any one should of set purpose omit to confess a sin, of which he knows himself guilty: and according to the opinion of the Doctors, 'tis an Evil, equally dangerous, to conceal voluntarily some sin in Confession, or to confess ones self so negligently, as to omit some for want of due examination. This is so common a misfortune, that 'twere fit to be preach'd aloud in all publick places, for the undeceiving of those, who ordinarily go and throw themselves at the feet of a Confessor, without any way preparing themselves by an Examination of their Life.

Those, that come to the performance of this Duty with so little respect, besides the Sacrilege, they commit, are as much oblig'd to make a new Confession, as if they had deliberately conceal'd one of their sins, their forgetfulness being so far from excusing them, that on the contrary it renders them more guilty: since it proceeds not from any Defect of Nature; but from a manifest Negligence, depending on the Will. For the avoiding these Inconveniences, 'tis necessary for a man to be careful in himself; and the order, he ought to keep in it, is, to begin the review of his Soul by the consideration of the moral Offences, into which she may have fallen. For this purpose 'twill do well to consider distinctly the ten Commandments of G O D, and the seven deadly Sins; and seriously to reflect, how often he has sinn'd against any of them, by Thought, Word, or Action, weighing also all the

the Circumstances, that have accompany'd the sin, if they are such, as ought necessarily to be confess'd, of which we will treat particularly hereafter.

§. 2.

The Obligation, we have to confess the Number of our Sins.

IN the second place, 'tis necessary for the Penitent, when he makes his Confession, to be exact in declaring the Number of his Sins; that is, how often he has committed such, or such a sin: for if this Number be not express'd, his Confession will not be entire. If he cannot distinctly remember the Number, let him declare it in such manner, as he can, more or less, according as he can best call it to mind: but if his memory cannot suggest to him any thing, like a distinct apprehension of the Number, and if it is a sin, in which he has liv'd a considerable time, as in some Enmity, or sin of Uncleanness, let him then declare, how long he has continu'd in this sin, to the end the discreet Confessor may thence conjecture, how often he may probably have offended during such a space of time. But if it be a sin, that has not this continuance, but into which the Penitent has several times fallen; as if he have sworn himself, spoken ill of his Neighbor, or curs'd him, and cannot remember, how often he has thus offended, let him tell at least, whether he has been subject to commit these sorts of faults, as often as occasion offer'd, or whether sometimes returning to himself, he resisted them: for by this

II.
ADVICE.

means his Physician, knowing the state of his Disease, can better apply himself to cure him.

§. 3.

Of Confession, and the Circumstances, that ought to accompany it.

III.
ADVICE.

TIS not enough to confess the Kind and Number of ones Sins, but their Circumstances must also be exprest, when they are of such a nature, as to be directly opposite to some of the Commandments of Almighty G O D, or of his Church, or when they greatly aggravate the sin, tho' they do not change the kind of it. For tho' the Act of the mortal sin be in it self but one, it may nevertheless be accompany'd with such deformity, or excess, that 'twill be absolutely necessary to declare them: as for example, if a man should steal Arms to kill another, or to take away his Wife, 'tis evident, that, tho' this be but one Act, which is to Rob, and that consequently he commits but one only sin, which is Theft, yet this single Act is infected with the poison of two more criminal, to wit Murder and Adultery, which are contrary to these two of G O D's Commandments: *Thou shalt not murder,* and *Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbors Wife.* And these Circumstances so augment the sin, that 'tis absolutely necessary to confess them. There are others, that are not so important, and which may be omitted, as the having spoken ill of others in the Church, or having committed some sin on a Fasting day, or an Holy day: but after all it does well to confess them, as one confesses venial sins.

And

And because 'tis not so easie a matter to discern well the difference between these two sorts of Circumstances, I will here set down those, we are most commonly oblig'd to declare in Confession.

First, as for what concerns sins of Unclean-ness, 'tis necessary to declare the Circumstances of the Person, with whom one has offended: the sins being different according to the different Qualities of the Persons: For to offend G O D with a single Person, is simple Fornication; with a marry'd-Woman, 'tis Adultery; with a Virgin, Whoredom; with a Kinswoman, Incest; with a Nun, dedicated to G O D's Service, Sacrilege, or Spiritual Adultery: and such Circumstances are so essential in respect of this sin, that one is bound to declare them, not only, when it has been consummated by the Act; but also, when it has been committed only in Thought and Desire, since it is the same thing in the sight of G O D. In this sin also, and in all others, we must take notice, whether they have caus'd any Scandal; which is likewise a necessary Circumstance: and by this word *Scandal*, is understood the giving another, either by Words or Actions, occasion to sin, as the solliciting of a Woman to Incontinency, or of a Man to Gaming, or the instigating any one to be reveng'd of his Enemy. Thus in sins of the Flesh, besides what we have already said, 'tis very necessary to distinguish, whether one has made use of such means, as are frequent in those sorts of Crimes, to induce the other person to sin, or whether she willingly offer'd her self to it: for in the first there is Scandal, which much augments the Malice; in the other there is not.

'Tis

'Tis also to be consider'd, whether, when a sin was committed, it were done in such a place, or before such persons, as from the evil Example, that was given them, might probably take occasion more boldly to do the like: as if any one, who has Authority over others, should eat flesh on a day of Fasting or Abstinence, or carelessly give himself to some other Licentiousness, in the presence of those, that depend on him, and will soon be ready to imitate his Faults. In this case there is an indispensable Obligation to confess this Circumstance of Scandal, and of the ill Example, we have given; and this is a point, that ought duly to be weigh'd by Persons of Quality, whose Houses are open for every one to game in; and by all Fathers, and Mothers, whose Words and Actions are like Laws to their Children: For thro' too common a misfortune, the Superiors taking pleasure in any thing, is sufficient to make their Inferiors look on it at least as lawful, if not also commendable. *Saul* thro' despair kill'd himself with his own hand, and his Esquire at the same time fell also on his own sword, believing, that he did not amiss in following the Example of his King. 'Tis also sometimes necessary to declare, whether one has sinn'd in an holy place, and particularly in three Cases, which are Theft, Bloudshed, and actual Uncleaness, when in any of these Actions there is sin, because this Circumstance of place changes the kind of the Offence, and makes it Sacrilege, which is a more heinous Crime. In like manner when a man has sworn, or made a Vow to do or not do something, to which he is moreover oblig'd by an express Commandment of Almighty G O D, as not to Swear, not to Kill, or any evil of like nature; if he

1 Kin. 31.

he shall afterwards happen to do the contrary, he is bound to declare this Circumstance, to wit, his Oath or Vow, which makes his sin double, and ought to be doubly consider'd.

§. 4.

That 'tis not necessary to confess any thing, but the kind of the Sin, of which we accuse our selves.

IV.
ADVICE.

THE fourth Advice is, that having perform'd, what I have declar'd touching the Number and Circumstances of Sins, there is nothing farther necessary to be done, but to express simply the Kind, or Name of the Sin committed; as Theft, Enmity, Adultery, or the like. Whence you may comprehend, that in confessing your sins there is no need of relating an History; 'tis enough to tell their Names, and how often you have committed them, without using many words to declare, how things pass'd. This is a Rule, very requisite to be observ'd, and if the most part of Penitents understood it, they might in a short time accuse themselves of a vast number of sins, by reducing them to their kinds, and saying: I have so many times Stollen, committed Adultery, Murder'd, &c. And for the better governing himself on these occasions, when a Penitent designs to accuse himself of a Crime, that seems to require a long Rehearsal, in which he will relate several Circumstances, that trouble his Conscience, and vary his sins, let him endeavor to pick them out of the body of his story, and accuse himself of them apart, and so he shall accuse himself, as he ought. But after all, if he has not under-

understanding enough to keep this method, let him accuse himself, as he can, for GOD requires no more of any one, than he knows, and is able to do.

You may from this Advice conclude, that 'tis not necessary to particularize the manner and order, in which the sin was committed; especially if they are things, which concern Uncleanneſs, but 'tis ſufficient ſimply to tell the kind. I could wiſh, I might ſtop here, and this matter being very loathſome, I ſhould be glad to be excus'd from ſpeaking of it; but ſince we are ſeeking after Remedies, I am conſtrain'd a little to offend the chaſt Ears by declaring in particular, what 'tis not lawful to be ignorant of. A diſhoneſt ſin may then be committed by thought, by word, by touch, or in ſine by the work it ſelf. If the Act has been conſummated, 'tis ſufficient to tell the name of it, as, I have ſo often committed Inceſt, Adultery, or ſimple Fornication; without ſpecifying any farther particularities, which are ſufficiently underſtood, when the kind of the ſin is known. If it were by laſcivious touching, you ſhall ſay, I have ſo often diſhoneſtly toucht ſuch a ſort of Perſon, without adding any thing more particular, unleſs by the touching there follow'd ſomething, that might change the kind of the ſin. If you have ſinn'd in word, you ſhall ſay, I have ſpoken filthy, to excite one to ſin, or to divert my ſelf, without rehearſing, what you ſaid. If you have offended in thought, you ſhall ſay, I have had a diſhoneſt thought, I conſented to it, I have taken delight in it, I have continu'd in it, without particulariſing, I thought on ſuch or ſuch a thing, as many do to their Confuſion, not being oblig'd to it by the Sacrament. Theſe things are ſo

so clear, that it seems every one ought to be almost instructed of them by himself; and we should not have spoken of them, did we not observe the contrary to be frequently practis'd: But there are some persons so stupid, that they want a Gandle at Noon-day; and the scrupulous shall by this learn, that they ought not to declare their sins in any other manner, They ought so to explain them, as they are taught by the Doctors, and content themselves with that, since they are oblig'd to no more.

§. 5.

In what manner Sins of Thoughts are to be Confess'd.

BEcause there is some particular difficulty in Confessing well Sins of Thought, I shall succinctly shew, how this ought to be done. A man then, being assaulted by an evil Thought, can behave himself only after one of these four ways: He will either immediatly repel it, or for some time entertain it, or determin to put it in execution, or continue in it purposely and deliberately with Delight. For the first, 'tis clear, there is no fault, but Merit, and a Reward to be expected; and so there is nothing to be confess'd. And if the Combat were so obstinate, that it should continue a whole day, he, who resists, is so far from committing any sin; that on the contrary, 'tis an occasion of Glory for him, and a means to obtain a Crown. The second is a venial sin, more or less considerable, according to the time, one shall have continu'd in it; the manner of confessing it, is to say, I accuse my self of having
had

V.
ADVICE.

had a thought of Uncleanneſs, of Hatred, or of Anger, and that I rejected it not ſo ſoon, as I ought; but ſtay'd my ſelf ſome time in it. As to the third, when one conſents to this Thought, and reſolves to put it in execution, tho' the Act follows not, 'tis a mortal ſin, and of the ſame kind, as the Act it ſelf would be: for, as Divines ſay, the exterior work has eſſentially nothing more, than the interior. For the fourth, which is the perſiſting voluntarily in an evil Thought, whether it reſpect Revenge, Uncleanneſs, or ſomething elſe as bad, 'tis alſo a mortal ſin, call'd by the Doctors, *A lingering Delight, Delectatio moroſa*: as if one ſhould ſay, Tho' I drink not in the Tavern, I take delight in thinking on't; and there are ordinarily none but diſſolute, vicious Souls, and ſuch, as give themſelves up to ſenſual Pleaſures, that fall into ſuch ſins: For tho' this is not a conſenting to the Act of the ſin, 'tis yet a conſenting to the Delight, it gives, and puts a perſon in evident danger of conſenting to the Act. This is to be underſtood, when a man ſees, and conſiders, what he thinks, and yet repels it not; for if, when he makes Reflection on the evil Thought, that occurs to him, he endeavors to ſhake off this Flame from him, 'twill then be no mortal ſin, becauſe he ſtays not willingly in it; but 'twill be a venial one, becauſe he ſhould have taken more care, not to be ſurpriz'd by it. This manner of ſin reſpects all mortal ſins, tho' it be more frequent in ſins of the Fleſh, of Hatred, or of Revenge, which commonly are more fiery, and deeper rooted than the reſt.

This is a Diſorder, into which thoſe very often fall, that are wholly addicted to Impurity and Vice, who, ſeeing themſelves depriv'd of the Means

Means to satisfie their brutish Desires, do, what they can, to enjoy, at least in thought, their delectable Pleasures, especially when their Honor, or the strict Watch, that is kept over them, hinders their accomplishing them in Act. Nor is it less common amongst those, who, are violently possess'd by some dishonest Passion: This is a Tyranny, that seizes on the heart with a strange Command, that carries it away, and keeps it continually fixt on the belov'd Object: and therefore there is nothing so dangerous, as to give this sort of Affections entrance in ones Soul: for 'tis to lodge in ones House a cruel Tyrant, and a Destroyer of Innocence, and to keep by one a secret Allurement to all sins. Those also, who engage themselves with too much heat in the pursuit of a Marriage, can very difficultly, without taking extraordinary care, avoid this Precipice: Let them know then, that, tho the pleasures of Marriage, are lawful to those, that are marry'd, yet they are not so, before they are marry'd; that the Delight, they feel, is present, and their Marriage future, and that it may possibly be hindered: and so that 'tis not lawful for them to enjoy these Pleasures till such time, as they receive them. These four Differences, which are to be found in sins of Thought, being well understood, 'twill be afterwards easie for a Penitent to accuse himself of them by telling, whether he entertain'd them, consented to them, or continu'd in them some considerable time with pleasure.

§. 6.

Of taking heed not to prejudice our Neighbors Reputation.

VI.
ADVICE.

THE sixth Advice is to preserve our Neighbors Reputation, confessing our own sins in such a manner, as not to discover those of another, nor ever to name any Person. 'Tis sufficient to say, I have sinn'd with one, that is marry'd, or that is single. If the Circumstance, to be express'd, is such, as the Confessor may by it know, of whom we speak, we must then seek another Confessor; and if that cannot be done, we may in such an Impossibility tell the Circumstance: for the Confessor will not reveal it, and this Declaration tends not to defame our Neighbour; but to discover our own Crimes. We must also be very exact, neither excusing our sins, nor aggravating them with any excess, nor telling a certain thing for doubtful, nor a doubtful for certain; but putting all things in their rank, telling them simply, as they are, and never swarving from the Truth.

§. 7.

Of the Care to be taken in chusing a good Confessor.

VII.
ADVICE.

THE last and one of the most important Advices is, to take as much care to find out a good Physician for the Diseases of the Soul, as is usually done in seeking one for those of the Body.

Body. This is as much as all is worth: For to take an ignorant Confessor, is to take a Guide, that will lead you to Hell. *If the Blind,* says our Saviour, *be Guide to the Blind, both fall into the Ditch.* And all those, who use not sufficient Diligence in this Search, are in extream danger: for, as we are taught by St. Chrysostom, Ignorance excuses not those, who might have found; what was fit for them, if they had been willing to seek it. And if Truth be so precious a thing, that 'tis the Salvation and Life of them, who know it, 'tis not reasonable, it should come to seek us; but that it should be sought after by all.

Mat. 23.
v. 14.

CHAP. VIII.

Of Cases, in which the Confession is null, and must be reiterated.

TO the end it may more clearly appear, of what importance all those things are, of which we have treated, I have thought, it would be very convenient to relate in few words the most ordinary Cases, in which the Confession is null, and consequently must be reiterated.

The first is, when the Penitent has in his Confession told a Lye in a matter of mortal sin. The second, if he has deliberately and of purpose omitted to accuse himself of any mortal sin, that is, if he understood, what he conceal'd, to be a mortal sin: for if he then thought it not so, but has since been better instructed, 'twill be sufficient for to accuse himself of this particularity, without

any need of reiterating his whole Confession: and tho' the ignorance were so gross, that it could not excuse his first Omission, when he fell into it, 'tis nevertheless sufficient to discharge him of this new Obligation. The third is, if having been a long time from Confession, he has not been careful enough in examining his Conscience: for in this case Forgetfulness excuses not the Penitent; but on the contrary renders him more culpable. The fourth is, when the Penitent has not a firm Resolution to leave the sin, in which he is, or when he will not restore, what he ought. The fifth, when he is excommunicated, and has not taken care to get himself absolv'd of his Excommunication, before his coming to this Sacrament. The sixth, when the Confessor and the Penitent are both ignorant, and yet there occur difficult and weighty matters to be discuss'd in the Confession: for in such a case it can hardly be, but there must have pass'd many Faults in this Action, which will have need of being repair'd.

'Tis however to be observ'd, that in all these Cases, which require the reiterating the Confession, if it be made to the same Confessor, 'twill not be necessary to repeat anew all the sins, one has confess'd, and which the Confessor yet remembers; but 'twill suffice only to say, I accuse my self of all the sins, I confess'd such a day, and moreover of such and such a Fault, which obliges me to reiterate my Confession. And because most men have great reason to apprehend, that they have been guilty of some of these Defects in the Confession they have made, 'tis a very prudent and wholsom Advice, for those, who have any care of their Salvation, to make once
in

in their life a general Confession; to put away entirely all these Negligences, and afterwards to begin a new Life, and watch over themselves with more attention. In fine, for the help of the weak, and the ease of those, whose memory is defective, we have thought, it would not be amiss to insert in this place a short Catalogue of Sins, according to which Penitents may easily examine their Consciences, and prepare themselves to come fitly dispos'd to this Sacrament. ~~This~~ ^{It is} not our intention in presenting you with this Memorial, to rake up a great number of sins, which rarely happen, and are little known, (as some Authors have done) but to set before you only those, into which Men most commonly fall.

A Method to make a good Confession of ones Sins

Accusations, to be made in the beginning of the Confession.

THE Penitent ought in the first place to accuse himself of coming to this Sacrament without due preparation, that is, of not being sufficiently sorrowful for his sins, and of not having so strong a Resolution, as he should, to amend his Life for the future.

Of not having been so careful and exact in the Examination of his Conscience, as he ought to have been.

Of not having been so recollected and devout before and after holy Communion, as this divine Mystery requires.

Of not having perform'd the Penance, en-

joyr'd him by his Confessor, with the exactness and Devotion, he ought.

Of not having entirely accomplish'd all, that his Confessor appointed him. And as to this point, he must declare, whether he commanded him to restore any thing, to perform any Vow, to leave any Sin, or any dangerous Occasion, in which he has not obey'd him. This must be particularly told, to the end the Confessor may know, how to behave himself with his Penitent.

This being done, he may proceed to other sins, and keep the following order.

I. COM-
MAND-
MENT.

Thou shalt honor GOD above all things.

Since, as St. *Augustin* says, GOD is to be honor'd by the three Theological Vertues, Faith, Hope, and Charity, we ought in this place to speak of the Faults, we shall have committed against these Vertues. And first, as for what concerns Faith, the Penitent shall declare, whether he has doubted of any Article of Faith: for he, who doubts in the Faith, is an Infidel.

Nay, tho' he has not absolutely doubted, if he has at least in any manner stagger'd; or not been sufficiently firm in matters of Faith, 'tis a Venial Sin.

If he has with too much curiosity desir'd to search into matters of Faith.

If he has given credit to Dreams, Divinations, Lots, and Witchcraft, or has made use of any of these things.

If he has given credit to, or carry'd about him any Superstitious Writings, containing obscure and unknown Words and Figures.

If he has perform'd any Work of Devotion with

with an ill intention, as to the end any one might dy.

As concerning Blasphemy in matters of Faith, let him accuse himself, if he has blasphem'd G O D, or his Saints.

If he has been angry with Almighty G O D, if he has murmur'd against him, or complain'd of him for the Afflictions, and Troubles, he has sent him, as if he were not just, or merciful.

If in this Rage he has desir'd his own death, or wish't G O D would take him out of the World, testifying, that he was weary of the Life he gave him.

As to Hope, let him examin himself, whether in the Adversities, that have befallen him, he has had such Confidence in G O D, as he ought, accompany'd with such Courage and Consolation, as this lively Confidence ordinarily brings with it.

If on the contrary he has plac'd his Confidence in Creatures, and in the Powers of this World;

If he has despair'd to obtain Pardon of his Sins, or Amendment of his Life.

If on the contrary thro' a presumptuous Confidence of being pardon'd for his Offences, he has persisted in his wicked life, or put off his Repentance to the time of his old Age, or the hour of his Death.

As concerning Charity, let him accuse himself, if he has not lov'd G O D above all things, with all his Heart, and with all his Soul, as he is oblig'd to do.

If he has done good Works rather for some human Respect or Interest, than for the Love of G O D.

If he has not been careful to recommend him-

self every day to GOD ; if he has not daily given him thanks for his Benefits, and principally for having created him, redeem'd him, and made him a *Christian*, and that he is not an Infidel or an Heretick.

If he knows not his Prayers, and what a *Christian* is bound to know.

If he has misus'd G O D's Servants, those, that pray, confess, and communicate ; if he has scofft at them, or spoken ill of them.

If he has put himself in danger to offend Almighty G O D by doing something, which he doubted to be sin.

II. COM-
MAND-
MENT.

Thou shalt not take the Name of G O D in vain.

If he has sworn any thing, knowing, or doubting, it was false, or if he took no care, whether what he swore, were true ; if he has promis'd any lawful thing with an Oath, not having intention to perform it, when he swore.

If he has sworn, threatning his Servants, without any intent to do, as he swore, 'tis a mortal sin. But if he afterward, thinks, 'twill be better to pardon, and shew Mercy, than to use Rigor, he is not then oblig'd to keep his Oath.

If in threatning others, that depended not on him, he has sworn to do something, that was a mortal sin : this is a mortal sin.

If he has sworn not to do some good A&t, as not to lend *Gratis*, not to undertake for any one in necessity, not to visit one, not to preach, this Oath bindeth not, no more than the following.

If he has on the contrary sworn to do any Evil.

He must also accuse himself of those Oaths, by

by which he curses, or imprecates on himself any Evil, which are very common: as let such a thing come on me; let such an Accident befall me.

If he has been the cause of any ones swearing falsely, or not performing a lawful Oath, he may have made.

If he has been accustom'd to swear frequently, 'tis a perillous Excess, because it puts us in danger of swearing sometimes false.

If he has omitted to reprehend his Children or Servants, when he has heard them swear.

As concerning Vows; if he has broken any Vow, or too long delay'd to fulfil it.

If he has made a Vow to do some Evil, or not to do some Good, neither of these Vows obliges.

Great care is also to be taken, that, in granting the change of any Vow, it be done with great prudence.

Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath-day.

III. COM-
MAND-
MENT.

If he has broken any Holy-day by doing, or commanding any servile Work to be done on it, except it were some small matter.

If he has neglected to hear a whole Mass on such days without lawful cause.

If he has behav'd himself at Mass, at Divine Service, and in Holy Places, with such Reverence, as is due to them; or if he has employ'd himself there in gazing, talking, or laughing, as does but too often happen.

If he has not taken care, that his Children and Servants should hear Mass on such days.

If he has spent the Holy-days in Gaming, or Vanities.

If he has neglected the hearing of Sermons.
If being excommunicated, he has been present
at Divine Service, or receiv'd any Sacrament.

IV. COM-
MAND-
MENT.

Thou shalt honour thy Father and thy Mother.

This Commandment comprehends, 1. The Duties of Children towards their Parents, and of Parents towards their Children, 2. Of Servants towards their Masters, and of Masters towards their Servants, 3. Of Superiors towards their Inferiors, and of Inferiors towards their Superiors, 4. Of the Wife towards the Husband, and of the Husband towards his Wife, 5. Of Sons-in-law towards their Fathers-in-law, and of Fathers-in-law towards their Sons-in-law. There is in a manner but one and the same Rule for all these, and there may be also added to it, what Young People owe to their Elders, and all those, who have receiv'd Favors, to their Benefactors.

According to this Order, a Son ought first to examin himself, if he has slighted his Father or Mother, if he has disrespected them, or spoken ill of them.

If he has disobey'd them in things, that were lawful.

If he has not succor'd them in their Necessities.

If he has behav'd himself disdainfully, or injuriously to them, because they were poor, or of mean Condition.

If he has not perform'd their last Wills and Testaments.

If he has desir'd their Deaths, to enjoy their Estates.

As for Fathers, let them consider, if they have
taken

taken such care of their Children, as they ought, especially in teaching them to know, and serve GOD.

If they have rebuk'd, or chastis'd them, when they have seen them neglect their Duties, or frequent evil Company.

If they have employ'd them in some good Exercise, to keep them from getting an habit of Idleness.

If they have been too indulgent to them, in letting them have their own Will, and follow their evil Inclinations.

For Masters, they ought to observe the same things; in as much as regards their Domesticks, and to provide them, what is necessary for them.

Let them consider also, if they have been careful of them, when they were sick, and caus'd them to receive the Sacraments.

If they have suffred them to engage themselves in dishonest Loves, or any other mortal sin, being able to hinder it.

Fathers-in-law, and their Sons-in-law, are oblig'd to live in peace and a good understanding, and therefore let them examin themselves, and see, whether there is any Enmity between them; if they have had any Quarrel, or given one another evil words, if worldly Interests have made them desire one anothers death.

Let marry'd persons consider their Duties: the Husband, if he has treated his Wife lovingly, if he has not abus'd her by words or otherwise, if he has provided her, what is fit for her: the Wife, if she has misbehav'd her self towards her Husband, if she has disobey'd him, if she has at any time offended him by injurious words, and thereby

thereby given him occasion to lose his Patience, or break forth into Oaths. If there be any groundless Jealousie between them.

Let Subjects honor their Superiors, let them see, if they have been disobedient to them, if they have contemn'd the Laws and Orders, they have given them, if they have despis'd them in their hearts, if they have spoken ill of them, if they have judg'd rashly of them, putting an ill interpretation on their Actions, saying, they did them on Passion, for Interest, or on other worldly respects, if they have not shewn Reverence to Persons, plac'd in Office and Dignity.

If they have contemn'd aged persons, if they have not honor'd them, if they have mockt them, or scost at them.

If they have been ungrateful to their Benefactors, if they have forgotten their Favors, or, which is much more infamous, rendred them Evil for Good.

V. COM-
MAND-
MENT.

Thou shalt not kill.

The Soul being far more considerable than the Body, the Penitent ought in the first place to reflect, if he has not spiritually slain any one, by having incited him, or given him counsel, or occasion to sin mortally, which is call'd the sin of Scandal.

If he has accompany'd him, favor'd him, or given him assistance in any wicked Action.

As to the Body; if he has kill'd any one, if he has desir'd or wisht his Neighbors death, if he has pray'd to G O D for it.

If he has born a deliberate hatred against any one with a design to be reveng'd of him, and how long this hatred has continu'd.

If

If he has taken away any ones Reputation, with the scandal of his Neighbor.

If he has engag'd in Factions and Quarrels, and if he has favor'd them.

If he has threatned any one, or given him reproachful Language, not being his Servant, or under His Government.

If he has refus'd to forgive (at least in the Court of Conscience,) him, who has humbly askt pardon of him.

If having offended any one by words, or actions, he would not desire his pardon, either by himself, or by a third person, or if he has not sufficiently satisfy'd him for his Offence,

Thou shalt not commit Fornication.

VI. COM-
MAND-
MENT.

In all sins GOD may be offended by Thought, Word, and Deed; but it more frequently happens in this. And if we are so unhappy, as to fall any of these three ways into sin, we must declare the Quality and Circumstance of the Person, with whom we have offended, as we have already said.

According to this order then, when a Penitent shall accuse himself of his Thoughts, he shall tell, if he has been negligent in speedily resisting his unclean Thoughts; if he has consented to them, with purpose to put them in execution, if he had opportunity; if he has long and deliberately taken delight in them, knowing what he did.

As to Words, if he has spoken filthy and dishonest words, if he has taken pleasure in such kind of Discourses.

If he has solicited any one to sin by Words, Letters,

Letters, or the interposition of a third Person.

As to Deeds, if he has consummated the sinful Act, or, if it has not been consummated, if he has been guilty of dishonestly touching either himself, or any other person.

If he has fallen into any voluntary Pollution, if he has himself procur'd it, or if it beset him in his sleep, of which the Judgment must be according to the Causes, preceding it, and the Sorrow, or Delight following it.

If one has done any thing to provoke others to this sin, either by painting, over curious or wanton dressing, shewing ones self at Windows, or other open places, and the like.

If he has endeavor'd to corrupt the Chastity of others by Presents, Promises, true or false, or any other means whatever.

If he has not avoided the occasions of sin, as dangerous Company and Conversation, or the having in his own house the occasion of sinning, which is the greatest, and most to be fear'd of all.

If he has taken pleasure in reading dishonest Books, which might provoke him to sin.

If he has not had recourse to Fasting, Prayer, the Sacraments, and other spiritual Remedies, when he has found himself tempted by this sin.

For marry'd persons, if they have not paid one another the Debt, which matrimonial Justice requires.

If they have by any means endeavor'd to hinder the effect of Generation.

If they have kept the natural use and order, if they have fallen into any Pollution out of this order.

If the Husband have had carnal knowledge of any Kinswoman of his Wives within the degrees prohibi-

prohibited: which is a Case, that hinders Matrimony, if it hapned before the Marriage: but if afterwards, the Husband cannot require the Marriage-Debt, without the Dispensation of his Pre-
late.

Thou shalt not steal.

VII. COM-
MAND-
MENT.

If he has taken any thing, belonging to another, by Deceit, Violence, Usury, or Simony.

If he keeps anothers Goods against the Owners Will, and does not restore it. Nor is it sufficient to have a design of restoring it hereafter, but he must immediately do it, tho by doing this Act of Justice he should be driven to want something, requisite for the decency of his Condition; particularly if the Owner himself be much endamaged by want of it.

If he detains his Servants, or Work-mens Wages, or Money, due to Tradesmen, against their will.

If he restores not such things, as he has found, when he knows the Owner.

If in buying or selling he has us'd any Deceit in the Wares, Price, Weight, or Measure; if he has bought of such, as were not capacitated to sell, as of Children, and the like; if he has taken of them any thing, they could not give.

If under pretence of selling on credit, he has taken above the just Price, having no other just cause to do so; which he shall submit to the Judgment of his Confessor.

If he has lent upon Usury, or enter'd into Society with any one, where the Loss and Gain are uncertain, with Covenant to have his whole Principal secur'd to himself.

If

If he has cheated in Gaming, and gain'd by it.

If he has play'd for more, than was convenient for one of his Condition.

If he has play'd with Minors, or Persons under age, for more, than they could play for.

If in gaming he has sworn, quarrell'd, or given evil Language.

If he has not faithfully discharg'd the Employ, for which he is paid, which respects not only Workmen; but also those, that are in the Service of Great Persons, as their Cashiers, Stewards, Overseers, or other Officers: for if their Master has receiv'd any damage by their negligence, they are bound to make it good.

If he, who has the disposal of publick Offices, Benefices, and other important Employes, regards only the Persons, to whom he gives them, and if he bestows them for worldly Respects, and not according to Justice.

If he has advis'd the giving of a Benefice, or Office to an unworthy Person, or one that is unfit for it.

If he has not paid his Tythes to the Church.

VIII. COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not bear false Witness.

This Commandment contains two great Branches: the one comprehends the Sins, which are committed in Judgments by the Judges, Lawyers, Witnesses, Jury, Plaintiff, and Defendant; and the other Slanders, Detractions, Mockeries, Suspitions, Lyes, and Flatteries, which are so common in the World.

As for the first, 'tis for the Penitent to consider, if he is or has been a Judge, Lawyer, Witness,

or

or Jury-man, and conformably to accuse himself, of what concerns these Employments.

As for the second Branch, he, who confesses, shall first reflect, if he has born any false Witness.

If 'tis a woman, she shall accuse her self, if thro' Anger or Jealousie she has spoken unseemly of any other woman, saying, That she behaves her self ill, that she brings others into ill Company, that she is a Witch, or a Thief, when she misses any thing out of her house: for to speak thus, when there is but little ground for it, is also to bear false Witness.

If he has spoken ill of any one with a bad intention, and design to do him a displeasure, which is call'd Detraction. If he has reveal'd any grievous and secret Fault of another, whose Reputation is blemisht by it, tho' he had no design to prejudice him: for tho' the thing be true, he is oblig'd to restore his good Name, which he had taken away.

If he has taken delight in hearkning to Detractors, and if he has either excited them to Detraction, or encourag'd them in it, if he has been too light in reporting the Evil, he has heard of another.

If he has not defended his Neighbors Reputation, when defam'd, knowing him to be innocent.

If he has found fault with another mans life, if he has mockt, or scott at the defects of others either in Body, or Mind, if he has judg'd rashly of his Neighbors words or actions, putting an ill construction on that, which might have been taken in good part, or, which is more dangerous, if he has spoken that as certain, which he only suspected in his heart.

If

If he is suspicious, taking occasion from the smallest matters to believe ill of his Neighbor, if he has sown Divisions, raising Discontents between Friends by carrying Tales from one to another, which often produces great Enmities.

If he has told any Lye to the prejudice or advantage of his Neighbor, or in any other manner.

If he has obtain'd any thing by false information, which he could not of right have expected.

If he has discover'd any thing, intrusted to him as a Secret, if he has open'd anothers Letters.

We have spoken of the ninth and tenth Commandments, in what we have said concerning the sixth and seventh.

Of the Seven Deadly Sins.

Of Pride.

I. SIN.

PRide is an inordinate desire of ones own Excellence: this is a sin, whence many others proceed, the principal of which are Vain-glory, Ambition, Presumption, Ostentation, and Hypocrisie. According therefore to this, he, who shall perceive himself infected with this sin, may accuse himself of every one of these kinds in the following manner.

And first, as touching Vain-glory, if he has glory'd in having done any wicked Actions, as in having been reveng'd, in having beaten, or dishonor'd any one, &c.

If he has attributed to himself any Glory for vain Qualities, and such, as deserve it not: as
for

for the Beauty of his Face, the Comeliness of his Body, the Gallantry of his Clothes, his Train of Servants, Wealth, Descent, and such-like things; which are of very little importance.

If he has glory'd vainly in those, that are indeed good, and worthy of Glory, as in his Vertue, Knowledge, and Prudence, all the Glory of which ought to be given to G O D alone.

If he has delighted in being flatter'd, or receiving Praises from men, with too much complacency for himself, and without referring the Glory to Almighty G O D.

As concerning Ambition, if he has excessively desir'd Honor and Glory, and has for that cause done any thing, contrary to his Duty.

If he has been so afraid of Shame, ill Repute, or Disesteem, as, for the avoiding of these Inconveniences, to have done, what he ought not, or omitted, what he ought to have done.

If thro' the sole apprehension of mens Speeches, he has abstain'd from doing any good, as confessing his Sins, Communicating, hearing Mass, conversing with devout Persons.

As for what respects Presumption, if he has been too much conceited of himself, esteeming himself more vertuous, more learned, more wise, or more noble, than he is; and if on the other side he has too good an Opinion of himself for what he is indeed, not attributing the Glory of it to G O D.

If he has too great confidence in his own Judgment, Knowledge, or Vertue: if for that reason he will not receive Counsel, Advice, or Correction from others. If for the same reason he defends manifest Faults, seeking Excuses in his sins.

If, not to seem overcome, he obstinately contends against what he knows to be true and reasonable.

If he has little esteem'd other Persons, speaking contemptibly of them: if with this Presumption of himself, he has derided or scorn'd the Weakness, or Ignorance of others.

As for what regards Hypocrisy, if he has affected to appear, what he is not; or desir'd to be thought holier than he is, to procure himself vainly a Reputation amongst men.

And in fine, as concerning Ostentation, if he has thro' Vanity priz'd himself, and put a greater value on his Actions, than he ought; if he has bragg'd of having committed any sin, as of having dishonor'd any Woman, beaten or mistus'd any person: if he has vaunted of any thing, he never did, especially if he were sinful, that he might pass for a man of Courage.

Of Covetousness.

II. SIN.

If he is covetous, if he has hoarded up much Money without a reasonable cause; or if on the contrary he has been prodigal, and squander'd away his Estate.

If he spends beyond his Ability, and to support it reduces himself to necessity; and defrauds his Family of their due; if he provides not, what is fitting, for his Children and Servants: if, to ease himself of his Daughters, he forces them into Religion.

If he is such an inordinate Lover of Riches, that he forgets GOD, and the Salvation of his Soul, for to satisfy his Covetousness.

If

If he has desir'd any ones Death, for to enjoy his Estate, or for any Advantage, he expected from it.

Of Lacbery.

This is treated of in the sixth Command- III. Sin-
ment.

Of Wrath.

Let the Penitent in the first place consider, if IV. Sin-
he has been so angry with himself, as to wish or
desire his own Death. If in his Anger and Fu-
ry he has hurt himself, if he has given himself
to the Devil, curs'd himself, or wounded him-
self.

As concerning his Neighbor, if he has been
angry with him, or taken distast at him, without
cause.

If he has spoken angrily, or discourteously to
him, if he has given him injurious Language;
calling him Thief, Drunkard, or Fool. If he be
not his Servant, tis a mortal sin.

If, to vex him, he has upbraided him with the
Faults, he has fallen into: if thro' the same Mo-
tive, he has utter'd the same injurious words, or
discover'd the same Faults of the Person, he would
affront in his absence.

If he has curs'd, or offer'd, to the Devil any of
GOD's Creatures: if he has wisht Vengeance
on them, whether they were his Servants or not,
tho' there is some difference between the one and
the other of these sins.

If he is obstinate, cholerick, quarrellsom, and
outrageous in his Words and reasonings.

If he has executed, what the wrath of his Heart suggested to him, by laying hands on any one.

Of Gluttony.

V. SIN.

If he has broken the Fasts of the Church.

If he has eaten Flesh on prohibited Days, without lawful cause.

If he has eaten with such excess, or of such Meats, as have prejudic'd his Health.

If he drinks or eats too much, too often, or with too great sensual Delight.

If he takes too great pleasure in delicate and curious Dier, and is at too much expence in it.

Of Envy.

VI. SIN.

If he has deliberately been displeas'd at his Neighbors Prosperity, or having some advantage over him, as if amongst Courtiers, one should envy another, because he is in greater favor, or employ, or because his Affairs succeed better.

If he has rejoyc'd at anothers misfortune, as to see him fallen from his Honor.

If he has spoken ill of him, to do him injury in his Person, or Reputation, or to raise his own on the ruine of anothers: if he has discover'd any of his Neighbors secret Faults, to diminish the Esteem that might be had of him, and if he has for the same cause been displeas'd, when he has been well spoken of.

of

Of Sloth.

If he has thrô sloth omitted to do any good ^{VII. Sin.} Work, as to hear Mass, or to pray, particularly, when he was oblig'd to do it.

If he has done the Works of GOD coldly and negligently.

If he is inconstant in his good designs and purposes, if he leaves his Exercises of Piety on the least occasion, if he delays them from day to day.

If he sleeps too much, if he mis-spends his time in vain Thoughts, idle Words, or unprofitable Actions.

If he is extraordinarily afflicted at the Troubles and Adversities, that befall him; and if on the contrary he is too much puffed up with Prosperity, and good Success, not giving GOD the Glory of it.

Of the Works of Mercy.

Let him in the first place accuse himself, if he has been negligent in the Spiritual Works of Mercy, particularly, if he has not given Counsel or Advice to those, to whom he might profitably do it: if he has neglected to reprehend them for their Faults, especially those, of whom he was oblig'd to take care.

If in performing this Duty, he has done it with such Anger, or with so little Moderation, that he did more hurt than good: if he has not been mov'd with so many Disorders, Miseries, and Heresies, as are in the World, and if he has not pray'd GOD to remedy them,

K 3

As

As to corporal Works of Mercy, let him consider, if he has assisted his Neighbor in his Troubles and Necessities, and if he has given Alms to the Poor according to his Ability.

If he thinks them burdensome to him, if he speaks ill of them, if he gives them harsh words, if he shews himself displeas'd at their importunity, if he derides them.

Of other particular Accusations; according to the State or Condition, one is in.

Besides these Accusations, which may be common to all sorts of Persons, there are some other more particular, which regard the State and Condition of every one. There is a difference between the Obligations of a Bishop, of a Curate, of a Priest, of a Religious Person, of a Merchant, of a Judge, of a Lawyer, and of a Physician; and thus the Faults, they commit in their Functions, are different, and they ought particularly to declare them.

Prelates, and all, that have charge of Souls, ought to accuse themselves of Non-Residence, and if they have neglected the Duty, incumbent on them, to feed their Flocks with their Doctrine, Example, and Prayers.

Priests, of what concerns their Office, and the celebration of Mass.

Religious Persons, of the Vows and the Obligations of their Order.

Judges, if for any worldly Respects, or other ill Motives, they have violated Justice, if they have too long delay'd it.

Lawyers, if they have maintain'd unjust Causes, if they have put off Tryals, or if they have
not

nor examin'd their Clients Cause with care enough.

Plaintiffs and Defendants, if their Pretensions were unjust, if they affected delays to perplex Affairs, and render them obscure: If they have conceal'd or torn Papers, that testify'd the truth, or if they have gain'd the Judges by Favor, Cabals, or open Corruption.

Witnesses, if they have sincerely declar'd the truth, without disguising, or falsifying it.

Let Merchants accuse themselves of dealing in prohibited Traffick, and if in their buying and selling they have done any thing contrary to Justice. And so of others, every one according to his Condition.

General Directions for distinguishing between Mortal and Venial Sin.

In all these sorts of sins, we have here set down, it would not have been amiss to declare, which are Mortal, and which Venial sins: because we are of necessity oblig'd to confess all our Mortal sins, but as to our Venial ones, it depends on our Will. But since this matter cannot be explain'd in few words, we will content our selves with giving some general Directions concerning this point, leaving the rest to the Judgment of the Confessor.

To know then, what is Mortal, and what Venial sin, these two following Rules are ordinarily observ'd. The first is, that whatsoever is contrary to Charity, is Mortal sin; and by Charity we understand the Love of GOD, and our Neighbor. According to this Rule, whatsoever is against GOD's Honor, or our Neighbors

Good in any matter of importance, is a Mortal sin : as to any way prejudice him in his Honor, in his Estate, or the like : for this destroys Charity, in which the life of the Soul consists, and is therefore rightly call'd Mortal Sin, because it takes away the Spiritual Life. But whatsoever is not against, but only beside Charity, is a Venial sin, as some idle words, which injure no body, some vain Complacency, some Hastiness, some kind of Sloth, or Gluttony, as the eating a little more, than is necessary, and other Faults of like nature. The second and more particular rule is, That whatsoever breaks any Commandment of GOD, or his Church, is a Mortal sin. Thus whosoever offends against the Commandment, which says, *Thou shalt not steal* ; or against that, which says, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery* ; or against the Precepts of the Church, which ordain the paying of Tythes, the Confessing once a year, or the Communicating at *Easter*, commits a Mortal sin. 'Tis nevertheless to be observ'd, that, what is of it self a Mortal sin, may notwithstanding happen to be only Venial, by reason of its Circumstances : for example, He, who steals a Bunch of Grapes, tho' he steals, commits not a Mortal sin, because of the small value of the thing : a Person, who has weakly defended himself against evil Thoughts, but yet not wholly consented to them, sins ; but not mortally : because the Action is imperfect, his Consent not being full.

'Tis also to be observ'd, that there are three sorts of Commandments : some are negative, as, *Thou shalt do no murder*, &c. which oblige always, and at all times : others are affirmative, as to give Alms, to be sorry for ones sins, to love GOD, these bind always, tho' not at all times, but

but only, when occasion requires: the third sort are mixt, and have somewhat in common both with the Negative, and Affirmative ones, as to restore another mans Goods: because this Precept on the one side commands us to restore, and on the other forbids us to retain, what belongs not to us; so those, which are of this nature, bind in both manners, to wit, always, and at all times. And thus 'tis not enough for him, who owes, to have a purpose of making Restitution hereafter, he is oblig'd to do it out of hand, and not to keep anothers Goods against the will of the Owner, according to the nature of the negative Commandment, which enjoyns it, and obliges always, and at all times.

C H A P. IX.

Of the Third Part of Penance, which is Satisfaction.

AFTER Contrition and Confession, must follow Satisfaction. This is the Third Part of Penance, and by this GOD is satisfi'd for the Faults, committed against him. We have declar'd the Reasons of it elsewhere, when we spake of Fasting: but 'tis convenient to repeat them again here. For the better understanding this important Instruction, 'tis to be consider'd, that, as he, who breaks the Laws of the Commonweal, is oblig'd to suffer the Penalties, ordain'd by those Laws: so he, who breaks the Laws of GOD, is liable to the Punishments, appointed

appointed by divine Justice. These Penalties are undergone either in this life, or the next; that is, either in this World, in Purgatory, or in Hell: In Hell the Torments are eternal: In Purgatory the Pains indeed last not for ever; but yet they are so terrible, that, as *St. Augustin* says, all the Torments of this World, tho' even the horrid'st, ever suffer'd by the Martyrs, are not in the least to be compar'd to them. Fastings and corporal Austerities, tho' but light Sufferings, exempt us nevertheless from this dreadful Punishment: for since G O D in these things regards not so much the sharpness, of what is suffer'd, as the Will, with which this Sacrifice is offer'd him, and since what is free and voluntary in this World, is forc'd in the other, a little Pain, voluntarily endur'd in this Life, has more value, and gives more ample satisfaction, than many great ones, suffer'd of necessity in the next.

On which you will perhaps ask me, if that the Sacrament of Penance is not sufficient to deliver us from the Punishment, due to Sin, how that of Baptism produces this Effect: for it effaces all, and at the same time absolves men both from the Pain and the Guilt? I answer you, that there is a great difference between these two Sacraments: That of Baptism is a spiritual Regeneration, and a new Birth of the interior man: and thus, as a thing, which is born anew, ceases immediately to be, what it was, and receives a new Being without retaining any thing of what it had before, as, when of a Kernel there grows up a Tree, the Kernel loses its Being, and the Tree receives a new one: so, when a Man is spiritually born again, he at the same time ceases to be that old Man, that is, that Child of Wrath and Perdi-

Perdition, he was before, and begins to be a new Man, which is a Child of Grace, and free at the same time both from Guilt and Pain. But the Sacrament of Penance operates not in this manner: It annihilates not past sins, as a Regeneration; but cures them, as a Remedy. This wholesome Medicine sometimes indeed entirely restores the Health of the Soul; but sometimes also it restores it not so perfectly; it frequently leaves in the Patients the Relicks of their ancient Infirmitie, which with care and good government wear away in time. Thus Penance sometimes cures perfectly, that is, both of Pain and Guilt, when 'tis accompany'd with perfect Contrition, such as was that of *St. Mary Magdalen*, and some others: but when the Contrition is not so full, it takes away indeed all the Fault, but it takes not away all the Pain, which must be suffer'd either in this Life, or the next. The manner of mens acting one with another gives us an Example of this Conduct. A Lord, who shall have committed a capital Crime against his Prince, may afterwards do him such great Services, as will render him worthy of his Favor, and obtain a general Pardon of the Punishment, which was due to his Offence; he may also do him others, not so considerable, and by that means recover his Princes Affection with some change of his Punishment, as Banishment instead of Death. *David* dealt thus with his Son *Abshalom*, for a Murther, he had committed on the person of his Brother *Amnon* in a Cause of Indignation, he had against him: he banisht him three years out of his Kingdom; but after that time being willing to pardon him, he did it on condition, he should not see his Face, nor enter into his Palace. In like manner, when
the

2 Kin. 13.
v. 14.

s Kin. 12.

● Kin. 24.

Num. 30.

Deut. 3.
v. 32.

the Contrition of a Sinner is not so perfect, GOD pardons his sin by the vertue of the Sacrament, and often exempts him from the eternal Punishment, and a part of the temporal, he had merited; but he will not permit this Criminal to enter into his Palace, nor so soon to see his Face, till time has purg'd away his stains either in this Life, or the next. Thus GOD acted with *David*. Seeing, that he confess'd his sin, and that his Repentance was sincere, he pardon'd him the Adultery, into which he had fallen, and re-establish'd him the Grace, he had lost; but he afterwards sent him great Afflictions for a Crime, which was pardon'd him.

What sin was ever more pardon'd, than that of *Aaron* and *Moses* at the Waters of Contradiction? Nevertheless, tho' the sin was forgotten, the Sentence, pronounc'd by the Divine Justice, had its effect; and these two holy Personages were for this cause excluded from entering into the Land of Promise. Thus then it happens to the greatest part of men in this Sacrament: the Fault is there pardon'd, Divine Grace is there acquir'd by the vertue of JESUS CHRIST's Passion, which operates divinely in it: but often by reason of the imperfection of the sorrow, a man remains oblig'd to certain degrees of Punishment, in such measures, as it pleases GOD to inflict them: And there being nothing so advantageous for the discharging of these Punishments, as Acts of Piety and good Works, those are without doubt most efficacious, which are most laborious, and most irksome to our Flesh. For since the Flesh, as *St. Gregory* says, has by its irregular Delights cast us into the Crime, 'tis fit, she should punish her self for it, and by voluntary Chastise-

Chastisements get rid of her Evil : and since we have made no scruple to displease GOD for the pleasing of our Senses, Reason requires, that we should afflict and mortify them for the satisfying of GOD.

CHAP. X.

Of the Original and Cause of Satisfaction.

BEing thoroughly perswaded, as we ought to be, by the Reasons, I have alledg'd, of the necessity of Satisfaction, let us now see, what is the Original of it, to the end you may the better know, how you ought to make it.

Remember then, what I observ'd to you in the beginning of this Book, that true Penance and the Conversion of a Sinner, is the greatest Favor, one can receive in this Life. Glory is indeed something more excellent than Grace, since the one is Grace begun, and the other Grace consummated ; but in effect 'tis a more extraordinary Favor for GOD to draw a Man out of sin, and put him in a state of Grace, than to give him Glory, after he has given him Grace. Moreover, as Baptism, which is the Door of the Sacraments, and the beginning of Mans Regeneration, brings along with it all the Vertues, and all the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, with the Grace, from which all these Benefits proceed : so true Penance, which is the beginning of our Resurrection, acquires all these Gifts, but particularly a new knowledge of spiritual and divine Things, for which man, as dwelling

dwelling in the Region of Darkness, and the Shadow of Death, was in a manner blind; it acquires a new Charity and Love of G O D, which is the form of true Penance and all other Vertues, and causes in our Soul wonderful Sentiments and Effects of this Vertue: For as natural Love is the Source of all the other natural Affections and Passions: so the supernatural Love of G O D is the Origin of all spiritual Affections and Motions, which are so much the greater, as this Love is more powerful. And as the Grace of Conversion is sometimes greater, as was that of *St. Paul*, of *St. Augustin*, and several others; and sometimes less, as the ordinary Conversions, which we daily see: so the interior Motions and Affections of the Soul, which come from this Grace, are sometimes greater and sometimes less.

This Vertue then causes first to spring up in the Soul so much sorrow, and so great a displeasure for having offended G O D, that a true Penitent would then rather chuse to have suffer'd a thousand sorts of Torments, than to have sinn'd against such a Master. It imprints in her a true Fear of the Divine Majesty, which she knows, she has offended, it renders her sensible, how justly she has merited his Indignation and Wrath, and makes her apprehend the effects of it: It makes her conceive a very great shame of appearing in his presence, like to that, which is seen on the Face of a Woman, who has offended her Husband, that receives her again into his House, after he has pardon'd her Fault; or such, as was that of the Publican in the Gospel, who, cover'd with Shame and Confusion, durst not lift up his Eyes to Heaven. In fine it excites in her a very strong Resolution to satisfy G O D by the mark
of

Luk. 18.

of a true Penance for the sins, committed against him, and an ardent desire of revenging upon her own Flesh the Evils, of which it has been the occasion: For considering, that to please this Enemy, and content its irregular desires, she has follow'd the disorderly love of Creatures, and renounc'd the love, she ow'd to her Creator and her lawful Spouse, she becomes so incens'd against her own Flesh, that there are not any Pains or Torments, she would not willingly inflict on it, as the only cause of her Misfortune.

The better to comprehend this Sorrow and just Resentment, imagin with your self, what a virtuous Damself would do, if having been promis'd in marriage to a man of Quality, that is absent; she should be afterwards deceiv'd by a wicked Woman, which should make her believe, that another is her Husband; and that being thus abus'd, she should live sometime with this suppos'd Husband, as with her lawful Spouse. What would be the thoughts of the person, who should have receiv'd this Injury, and what would be the motions of her heart against her, that should have so basely betray'd her? She would without doubt think the drinking her Bloud to be but a small matter, to be reveng'd on her for the loss of her Honor. The going to this Excess would be indeed a sin: but 'twould yet be difficult for Nature to forbear it. 'Tis the same thing with a Soul, whose Eyes GOD has open'd, and to which by a new Light he has discover'd on one side, that he is her lawful Spouse, and the end, for which she was created, and on the other, that by the Allurements of a wicked woman (which is her corrupt Flesh) she has stretcht out her arms to the Enjoyment of Creatures, embracing them

them with a Love, which is only due to the Creator; now in this condition how can she have any patience with her? How can she forbear tormenting her, and executing on her the severest Vengeance, since she has been the cause of her falling into the most criminal of all Adulteries? 'Tis thence, arises the Fervor of some Penitents in the beginning of their Conversion, who cannot be perswaded to put the Discipline out of their hands, or lay by a little their Hair-cloths, Fastings, and other Austerities, which often ruin their Health, if they are not made to keep a moderation in them.

Such was the Spirit of Penance, which the holy man *Job* expresses to us in these words: *I have sinn'd, what shall I do for thee, O keeper of men?* As if he would more clearly say according to Saint *Augustin's* Interpretation: O Lord, I acknowledge my sin, and the trouble, it gives me, is such, that there is no pain, I would refuse to suffer for the expiating it. See, O Lord, what thou pleasest to have me do, behold me ready, for whatsoever thou wilt do with me: I have nothing else to offer thee, but an Heart, dispos'd for whatever thou wilt command it: If it be thy pleasure, that I should be burnt in raging Flames, that my Body be torn in pieces, or that I endure any other Torment whatsoever; behold, I am ready: I offer my self to thee, bound hand and foot, and lying prostrate before thee; I fly not; I refuse thee not for my Judge; I appeal not from thy Judgment; I alledge no Excuses, nor desire any mitigation of my punishments. Judge me only according to thy Will: be thou the Knife, and let me be the Flesh; cut me, where and how thou pleasest, provided thou pardon me the sins, I have committed.

committed. 'Twas thus, David afflicted himself, when he said: *I am afflicted, and am humbled exceedingly: I roared for the groaning of my heart. Lord, before thee is all my desire, and my groaning is not hid from thee. My heart is troubled, my strength hath forsaken me, and the light of my eyes, and the same is not with me.* Thus ought all those to humble, afflict, and chastise themselves, who have presum'd to offend their G O D. For (as an holy Doctor says) 'tis fit, that a Soul, which has forsaken G O D, to please her self inordinately in the Creature against the will of the Creator, should pay with rigor so lawful a Debt, and by voluntary pains purge away the criminal Delights, with which she had blinded her self. Since Guilt naturally deserves to be follow'd by Pain, which amends and corrects it, 'tis just, that they, who have dar'd to commit many Faults, should procure themselves many Pains: and since Man has by sin separated himself from the sovereign Good, and foolishly adher'd to the Creature, which is an intolerable Contempt of Almighty G O D, 'tis just, that, to expiate this so criminal Injury against this divine Power, he should by his own will abase himself even to the dust of the Earth.

In this manner then do they labor to satisfy G O D, whose Eyes he has open'd with his celestial Light; to the end that knowing the greatness of the Divine Goodness, they may therein know also their own extreme Vileness, and that the one and the other may be the measure of their Satisfaction. To strengthen you in this design, and at the same time not only to produce an Example, but also to give confusion to the wretched Carelessness, which is now found

L

amongst

amongst men; I have thought it would not be amiss to set here before your Eyes some Circumstances of the admirable Austerity and Rigor of certain Penitents, whom St. John Climacus found in a Monastery, which this holy man, as an Eye-witness, relates almost in these very words.

S. Joan.
Clim. gradu
5. art. 4. &
seq.

Being come into this Monastery, I beheld there things, which the Eye of the Slothful has never seen, the Ear of the Negligent has never heard, and the Heart of Sluggards will never be able to comprehend. I saw there Actions and Words, capable, if I may so speak, to do violence to the Almighty, and bow down his Mercy in a moment. I saw some of these holy Penitents, who pass'd whole nights standing upright in the open Air, as if they had been immovable; and when Sleep began to seize on them, I saw them struggle by reviling themselves to keep it off, as unwilling to grant their Bodies the least Repose. I saw others, who, keeping their Eyes perpetually fixt towards Heaven, with never-ceasing Sighs and Tears implor'd the Divine Mercy and Assistance. Others on the contrary said with the Publican, that they were not worthy to lift up their Eyes towards Heaven, or to speak unto Almighty GOD; and thus in Sorrow and Silence they offer'd him up their Souls, fill'd with Confusion and Fear. Others there were, who, clad with Sacking and Hair-cloth, hid their Faces between their Knees, and struck their Foreheads against the Ground with inexplicable bitterness of Heart. I saw some, who had water'd the Earth round about them with their Tears; and others, that lamented excessively, because they could not weep. Several others, mourning over themselves, as we do over the Grave of a deceas'd Friend, bewail'd the loss of their Souls: Others there were, who ready to roar for grief, eagerly strove to stifle the noise of their Complaints, till no longer able

to repress them, they were forc'd to let them break forth with greater violence. I saw some, who by their exterior Actions, and by the apparent trouble of their Minds, appear'd so astonish'd, that one would have taken them for Statues of Stone, so insensible of all things had the excess of their Sorrow rendred them. Their Heart was plung'd in an Abyſs of Humility; and their scorching Grief had dry'd up all their Tears. And a little after this holy man goes on thus: There might one have seen these holy Penitents, full of sorrow, and bowing down to the Earth, who, condemning all care of their Flesh, mingled their Bread with Ashes, and their Drink with Tears. There were heard amongst them no words, but such as these: Wo, wo be to us, Wretches as we are. 'Tis with Justice, O GOD, 'tis with Justice. Pardon us, if thou pleasest, O Lord, pardon us. Many of them had their Tongues hanging out of their Mouths, like weary'd Dogs, thro' the extremity of the Thirst, that tormented them: Some there were, that in the height of Summer stood parching in the Suns most violent heat; and others on the contrary in the depth of Winter suffered themselves to freeze with cold. Some took a little Water to refresh their Tongue, but not sufficient to quench their Thirst; and others contented themselves with a small morsel of Bread, refusing more, and saying, they were not worthy to eat the Food of Men, since they had liv'd the Lives of Beasts.

Amongst these Exercises, 'tis easy to be imagin'd, there was no room for Divertisements, or idle Discourses, and consequently much less for Wrath, or ill Humors; the Care of the Body, the Pleasure of good Cheer, and the least smোক of Vain-glory, were all utterly banish'd. Their whole Employment was to cry day and night to our Lord, and no Voice was heard in this company, but that of Prayer. There were

some, who, beating their Breasts as fiercely, as if they were knocking at the Gates of Heaven, said, O Judge, full of Compassion, open to us by thy Mercy that Gate, which our Sins have shut against us. Another said,

Psal. 79.

v. 4.

Luk. 1. v. 73.

Psal. 78.

v. 4.

Isai. 49 v. 9.

Shew thy Face to us, O Lord, and we shall be saved.

Another said; Shew thy self, O Lord, to these Wretches, that sit in darknes, and in the shadow of death.

Another said: Let thy Mercies, O Lord, prevent us speedily: for we are in extreme Poverty. Others said:

Perhaps it will please GOD one day to be reconcil'd to us, and to behold us with a favorable Eye: Perhaps we shall one day hear that Voice, which will say

to the Prisoners, Come forth of your Bonds; and to those which are in Darknes, Receive Light.

They had always Death present before their Eyes, and speaking to one another, they said: What will befall us at that last hour, and what shall our End be? Will GOD revoke the just Judgment, we have deserv'd? Shall our Prayers have had force enough to ascend even to the Throne of the Divine Majesty? Shall they be found worthy to be there receiv'd? Shall they have advantage'd us, and by what Merit shall they have been apply'd to us? Shall it be true, that coming forth of our Mouths, still altogether unclean, and polluted, they have nevertheless found favor before the Lord? Who can tell, whether our good Angels, to whose custody GOD has committed us, are here about us, or whether the stench of our sins has driven them away? And others answer'd

Jonah. 3. v. 9.

these Demands, saying: Who knows, Brethren; as heretofore the Ninevites said, whether our Lord will not pardon us, whether he will not turn the Eyes of his Mercy towards us, and deliver us from Death, after we have invocated him with perseverance even to the end of our Lives? For he is merciful, and our Tears and Labors will appease him. Let us run, Brethren, let us run: for we have need to run, and to run with

all

all our force, that we may get to the place, from whence we are fallen. Let us run always toward that Mark, let us not spare our filthy Flesh; let us revenge on it the Excesses, it has committed; and let us make it bear the Punishments, it has made us deserve.

This is, what these true Penitents said, and the exterior state of their Bodies no less express'd the interior sorrow of their Souls. Their Countenances represented rather dead, than living persons; their Eyes were dry, and sunk into their Heads; the Flesh of their Cheeks appear'd rivell'd, and as it were parcht with the scalding of their Tears; the Hair of their Eye-lids was fallen away by reason of their Weeping; their Knees were hardned like a Camels Skin by their continual Prayer; their Breasts appear'd bruist with Blows, and their Lungs were so prejudic'd by them, that their Spittle was always seen mingled with Bloud. These blessed Criminals besought their Superior, who might indeed be consider'd as an Angel amongst men, that he would load their Necks and Hands with Chains, that he would put Irons on their Feet, and let them remain in this condition till the day, they should be laid in the Grave, of which also they thought themselves unworthy.

But when the last hour of any of these Penitents approacht, 'twas a far more dreadful Spectacle to see the Actions and Motions of their Companions at that instant: for they encompass'd him on all sides, and with hanging-down Heads, sad Looks, and mournful Words, said to him: How dost thou find thy self now, dear Brother? what are thy Thoughts? what dost thou say? what is thy Hope? what, dost thou think, will become of thee? Hast thou obtain'd, what thou sought'st with so many Labors? Dost thou see, that the Haven of Salvation is open for thee? Dost thou receive any

- Pledge, or certain Assurance of it? Does not thy Heart perceive some new Light, and does it not bear some Voice within it, saying to it: Thy sins are forgiven thee, or Thy Faith hath made thee safe? Or on the contrary, tell us, if thou hear'st not these terrible words;
- Mat. 9. v. 2. and 22. *Let the sinners descend down into Hell, and all Nations, that forget GOD: Or these others; Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the utter Darkness:*
- Pl. 9. v. 18. *Or these; Take away the wicked, that he see not the Glory of GOD. What sayst thou, Brother? Speak freely to us for our Instruction. We conjure thee to do it, dear Brother, to the end we may learn by thy Example, what we must one day expect: for thy Suit is now come to an end, thy Cause will soon be decided, the Judgment, thou shalt receive, will be for Eternity, and never will be chang'd; we wait, what will be the Event of ours, which is yet doubtful and uncertain. Some answer'd to these Demands:*
- Mat. 22. v. 13. *Blessed be the Lord, who has not suffer'd us to be a Prey to the Teeth of our Enemies: Others answer'd with more sorrow and grief: Wo be to the Soul, which has not faithfully kept the Vows of her holy Profession: for now is the hour, in which she shall know, what is prepar'd for her to all Eternity.*
- Pl. 123. v. 6.

I confess, that having heard, and seen all these things, and compar'd my Sluggishness with their Sufferings, I wanted but little of falling into Despair: For what, think you, is the Situation and Structure of this Monastery? 'Tis nothing but Obscurity, Stink, and Filthiness: All is there hideous and loathsome. Thus 'tis not without Reason call'd a Prison, and an Abode of Criminals, since one cannot so much as look on it without weeping, and entring into the thoughts of a true Penance.

All this will perhaps appear incredible or impossible to the Sluggish and Negligent; but true Penitents, and

and those, who know, what the Happiness is, they have lost by sin, will judge otherwise of it: For the Soul, which finds her self guilty of having broken the Covenant, and solemn Treaties, she had made with her GOD, and remembers, that with the Peace and Friendship of this Lord she has lost the inestimable Treasures of his Grace, the Consolations of the Holy Ghost, and has quencht the Fire of Charity, which heretofore produc'd in her such sweet Tears, conceives so violent a sorrow for her Offences, that she not only suffers all these Labors with Patience, but would infinitely augment them, and even crucify her self, if it were lawful for her so to do. Such were these blessed Criminals, or rather these holy Fathers, when they remembered their past Happiness, and all the sweet and pious Exercises, they had heretofore employ'd themselves in, saying with the holy man Job; *Who will restore* Job 29. v. 2;
me to the Happiness and Joy of my first years, to the 3. &c.
*time of my youth, when GOD was my Guard and my Defence, when he was secretly in my House, when his Candle shin'd upon my Head, and when by the Brightness of his Light I fear'd not to walk thro' Dark-
 ness, when I wash'd my Feet with Milk, and the Rocks distill'd for me Balm and Honey?*

'Twas thus, they call'd to mind their past Happiness, and looking back on all the heavenly Favors, they had receiv'd, they wept bitterly, and melting wholly into Tears, said: Where is now that first Purity of our Prayers? where is that Confidence, with which we offer'd them to GOD? where are those so tender and sweet Tears, which stream'd from our Eyes in the midst of the Bitterness and Contrition of our Hearts? where is that intire Chastity of Body and Soul, which made our principal Glory? where is that perfect Loyalty, and Obedience we had for our Superior? what is become of that heavenly Force, and that

Efficacy, we observ'd in the Success of our Prayers? All these things are disappear'd, and vanish like Smoke. And uttering these Words, the Sorrow for their Loss, and the Horror, they had of themselves, grew so great that they begg'd of GOD, he would send them during this Life all the Torments in the World, to be reveng'd on their Bodies for the Evils, they were the cause of: Some desir'd of him violent Diseases; others, to be depriv'd of their Sight, and become Objects of Misery to the Eyes of the World; and others to be struck with a Palsy, which should render all their Limbs lame, and useles, that they might by present Miseries escape those future ones, they apprehended.

In fine, Brethren, I know not, how I was able to continue so long among such terrible Spectacles, and to endure the sight of so many Torments, and so many Tears. I stay'd there thirty days, wholly astonish'd at what I saw, which being ended, I return'd to visit the Superior, who govern'd this Monastery. He seeing me quite alter'd, and wholly transported, and comprehending the cause of my Amazement, said to me with his usual sweetness: And well, Father, have you seen the Labors of these generous Combatants? Yes, Father, answer'd I to him, I have not only seen them; but admir'd them also, and esteem them much more happy, who, having fallen, thus bewail their Sins, than those, who having never fallen, bewail not themselves at all: because their Fall seems to me thro' an admirable Effect of Grace to have been an occasion of their more happy and more glorious Rising again.

St. Climacus tells not this on the Report of another, he faithfully represents the things, he saw with his own Eyes; and tho' this Relation appears a little too long; I thought my self oblig'd not to omit any thing in it, as well for your benefit, as for several other reasons. The first

first is, that Men may be confounded, and humble themselves exceedingly, seeing the cold and dull Penances of this time, compar'd with the Fervor, and Rigor of past Ages. The second, that we may see, how far the Charity, which the Holy Ghost has for us, goes, what the strength, and what the Lights are, which his Grace keeps always in a readiness for all the Faithful; and may hope, that, as he has communicated it freely to all those, who went before us, he will neither refuse it to those, which are with us, nor to those, that shall come after us, if they persevere in works of Penance, as these ancient Fathers did. The third, that being grounded on so solid an Hope, and strengthened by the Example of these Saints, we may be stirr'd up to attempt something more considerable, than what we do: since in effect their Bodies were no otherwise fram'd than ours, nor had they any other G O D, nor any other Assistance in their Labors, but what we have; and that setting before you hard and difficult things, you may be the less discourag'd to embrace those, which are easier.

'Tis nevertheless true, that no man ought to be dismay'd, tho' he enters not at first into that high Perfection, of which these Saints have left us an Example: For, as in the Body there are many Members, of which some are more, and others less honorable, and as in Heaven there are many Mansions, of which some are higher, and others lower: So in the Church there are different Degrees of Merits, different Institutions, and different sorts of Penances, that dispose men for them, and that in fine what is necessary in one manner of Life, is not in another. Neither is it absolutely necessary, we should attempt at first, what
great

great Saints have practis'd ; many of their Actions are propos'd to us rather to be admir'd, than imitated. What becomes a Giant, is not fit for a Dwarf ; and what serves only to exercise great Souls, would ruin those, that are weak.

CHAP. XI.

Of the three principal Works, by which we satisfy GOD.

SINCE painful and laborious Works are also of their own nature satisfactory, we shall, to follow the Doctrine of the Church and the Saints, establish three sorts of satisfactory Works: to wit, Fasting, Alms, and Prayer. For these three things, besides their being holy and efficacious, are also not to be perform'd without giving some pain to our Flesh, which thus by the feeling of pain satisfies GOD for the criminal Pleasure, it took in sinning. Moreover, as there are three things in the power of men, with which they commonly offend GOD, to wit, their Wealth, their Body, and their Soul: so 'tis fit they should make him satisfaction with all the three ; and make him a generous Sacrifice of them, consecrating their Estates by liberal Alms, their Bodies by rigorous Fasts, and their Souls by continual Prayers. 'Tis also a means to accomplish in some sort all, that Justice requires, since generally speaking Sin offends either GOD, our Neighbor, or our selves : Now those three Vertues regard these three Objects, for by Fasting the Body is chastis'd,

fin'd, by Alms our Neighbor is comforted, and by Prayer GOD is honor'd.

§. I.

Of the first Satisfactory Work, which is Fasting.

HE, that desires sincerely, and with all his heart to satisfy GOD, must place his principal Care in the Exercise of these three Works, and first begin by Fasting. We have said, that the Pain, it brings with it, satisfies for the Pleasure, which has been taken in Sin, and that it inflicts a just Punishment on our Flesh, which is usually the Cause of all our Diseases. Moreover, as St. Bernard says, *Whilst we by Fasting abstain from lawful things, we obtain pardon for those, that are unlawful, and thus with a short Fast, which lasts but for a moment, we redeem the eternal Fast, which are suffered in Hell: for one only mortal Sin deserves Hell. In that woful Place there is no Food tasted. The rich Glutton* Luk. 16, vi. 24. *begs but one only drop of Water; and in so many Ages 'tis not given him. In that place is no Comfort to be found, and Miseries have there no limits. Happy then is the Fast, which secures us from the Fasts and Torments, that never shall have End. The same Saint adds, That Fasting not only washes away sins, but that it also cuts off the Root of all Vices; that it not only obtains Pardon for our Faults, but also procures us Grace; that it not only effaces past sins, but preserves us also from those, we might commit in time to come. St. Peter de Ravennâ expresses the Excellency of Fasting by wonderful Epithets. He calls it the Palace of GOD, the Camp of JESUS CHRIST, the Wall of the Holy Ghost, the Ensign* of

of Faith, the Mark of Chastity, the Standard of Holiness. And St. Augustin assures us, that Fasting purifies Souls, raises the Understanding, subdues the Flesh to the Spirit, makes a contrite and humbled Heart, drives away the darkness of Concupiscence, cools the heat of Impurity, and kindles the Light of Chastity; that Fasting moderates our Desires, mortifies our Passions, instructs our Life, and puts Bounds to our Covetousness. Fasting is ally'd to all the Virtues: Poverty acknowledges it for her Brother, Penance for her Son, Chastity for her Mother, Prayer for her most faithful Companion; 'tis the Destroyer of Self-love, the Preserver of our Health, and one of the most sure and most powerful Means to reconcile us to GOD, and obtain us his Graces. By Fasting the Ninevites stop't the just Indignation, which GOD had conceiv'd against them: By Fasting the Children of Israel, humbling their Souls before GOD, found Assistance in their Necessities: By Fasting the three Children in the fiery Furnace were defended from the Fury of the King of Babylon: By Fasting Elias was taken up in the fiery Chariot, Moyses receiv'd the Law, and the Son of GOD prepar'd himself to preach the Gospel, tho' he had no need of it, but only to give us an Example.

Jonah 3.
v. 10.

1 Kin. 7. v. 6.

Dan. 1. v. 8.
12.

4 Kis. 2.
Exod. 24.
v. 28.

Mat. 4. v. 2.

Let all those then, who desire to satisfy GOD, and take revenge on their sins, that they may enjoy all these Advantages, arm them with an holy Hatred against themselves, that is, against their own Flesh; let them execute Justice on it, let them punish its Excesses by Fastings, Watchings, Disciplines, Hair-cloths, coarse Apparel, hard Lying, and all other Austerities, they can: Thus they will not only give to GOD the satisfaction, which is due to him, but will triumph also over the most powerful of their Enemies, and render their

their Bodies and Souls living Temples of the Holy Ghost. Govern your selves nevertheless in these Exercises with Prudence, take Counsel of the Wise, use them with moderation according to their Advice, and take heed, lest aiming to destroy an Enemy, you destroy your selves. Chastise the Flesh, but preserve to your Bodies the strength, they stand in need of for the Service of G O D. He commands in his Law, that in all Sacrifices there should be offered Salt, to teach us, that in these, which are spiritual Sacrifices, we must always mix Wisdom and Discretion. Many pious Souls, for want of thoroughly weighing this Consideration, have ruin'd their Health, and stopt in the midst of their Career: for being oblig'd in order to their Recovery to omit the practice of these holy Exercises, they have unfortunately found themselves gone much backward in Vertue, which is an Attendant on the Faithfulness and Fervor, wherewith they are undertaken.

§. 2.

Of the second, which is Alms.

BUT, Brethren, Fasting must not go alone, giving of Alms must be its faithful Companion, and if you will have it beneficial to you, the Works of Mercy must go along with it. St. *Augustin* says excellently, that *Fasting without Charity and Alms, is like a Lamp, which has no Oil.* And in another place, speaking to the Faithful, he says to them: *Brethren, give Alms, and your Prayers shall be heard; JESUS CHRIST will help*

help you to amend your Lives, he will pardon your past Sins, he will deliver you from future Evils, and he will give you eternal good things. On this Subject St. Peter de Ravenna has also these excellent Words, That tho' Fasting takes away the Weakness, left by Sin, moderates the Passions of the Flesh, and cuts off many Occasions, which make us fall into Disorder; it nevertheless restores not perfect Health without the assistance of Mercy, Charity, and Alms. Fasting, adds he, cures the Wounds of Sin; but it takes not away wholly the Scar without the precious

Tob. 4. v. 11. Balm of Alms. The holy man Tobias teaches us, that it delivereth from all Sin, and from Death, and will not suffer the Soul to go into Darknes. Ecclesiastical affirms, That, as the Water quenches Fire, so Alms extinguishes Sin. And St. Ambrose says, That the force of Alms is wonderful: 'Tis a living Spring, which with its waters quenches the Flames of our Vices, and by its Effusion, as that of a great River, puts out the fire of our Sins: so that tho' GOD be offended, tho' he be justly provok'd to wrath, he pardons for the sake of their Alms those, whom he had resolv'd to punish for their Offences. And St. Augustin says, That, as the Fire of Hell is quencht by the wholsom Water of Baptism, so the burning Heats of our Sins are allay'd by Alms, and other Works of Justice: insomuch that the Pardon of our Sins, which is granted us only once in Baptism, is daily, as in a new Baptism, imparted to us by the means of Alms. 'Tis true, that this Comparison does not hold in all its parts; but 'tis however a great Commendation to Alms, that it may in something be compar'd to the saving Waters of Baptism, which is the Source and Origin of the spiritual Life. Wherefore the Prophet Daniel finds no Remedy to deliver King Nebuchodonozor from the terrible

terrible Judgment, Heaven had pronounc'd against him, but by counselling him to have recourse to the sacred Anchor of Alms. O King, says the Prophet to him, *take my Counsel, redeem thy Sins with Alms, and endeavor to obtain the pardon of thy Iniquities by works of Mercy towards the poor*: for he well knew, that there is nothing more prevalent with GOD, or more likely to encline him to shew Mercy, than our exercising Mercy towards men. For we shall be judg'd with the same measure we shall have measured to others: wherefore at the last day Works of Charity are so much esteem'd, that on them depends the Judgment of our Life, and the Decision of our Eternity. St. Augustin thus explains this Evangelical Truth. *'Tis written, says this Saint, Redeem your sins with Alms, because in effect our Lord loves the Charitable above all things, and recompenses his Elect principally in consideration of the Relief, they have given to the Miserable. As if he should more clearly say: 'Tis a difficult matter diligently to examine your Life, and use Mercy towards you: nevertheless, go, enter into the eternal Kingdom: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me to drink: So that the Kingdom of Heaven is not given you, because you have not sinn'd, but because ye have redeem'd your sins with Alms. As on the contrary he will say to the Wicked: Go ye cursed into eternal Fire, not only because ye have sinn'd, but also because ye have neglected to redeem your sins by Alms: for if ye had at least us'd this Remedy, 'twould have deliver'd you from the punishment, that is falling on you.* St. Peter de Ravennâ passes yet farther, when he says: *'Tis an admirable thing to see, how pleasing to GOD the Relief is, that is given to the Poor: since that in the Kingdom of Heaven, in the presence of Angels,*

Dan. 4. v. 27.

Mar. 4. v. 24.

Serm. 50. de temp.

Angels, and in that great Assembly of men rais'd from the dead, there is no mention of the death, that Abel suffer'd, nor of the World, which Noah preserv'd, nor of the Faith, that Abraham had, nor of the Law, which Moyses gave, nor of the Cross, to which Saint Peter was fastned; but only of the Bread, that is given to the Poor. And St. Chrysostom, ravish'd with the beauty and power of this Vertue, says thus in one of his Sermons: *Alms-giving is a Friend of G O D's, she is always about him, she obtains Graces for whom she will, she breaks the Bonds of sins, she drives away Darknes, she stifles the Flame of our Passions; The Gates of Heaven are open to her, those, that keep them, respect her as a Queen, they ask not, who she is, nor what she seeks: All go to meet her, and receive her with joy: She is a Virgin, she has wings of Gold, and her Apparel is wonderfully glorious: Her Countenance is beautiful, and full of sweetness: Her swiftness, and the Wings, she wears, in a moment bring her into G O D's presence.*

Since this Vertue then is of so great efficacy, they, who design to satisfie G O D, and obtain of him the Mercy, they desire, must, as the Apostle speaks, *cloath themselves with Mercy*, and take care to be adorn'd with all the good Works, belonging to it: let them have great compassion on the Miseries of the Poor, and relieve them to the utmost of their Ability; If they have not, wherewithal otherwise to succor them, let them assist them with their Counsels, their Cares, and their Prayers; or if they are wholly unable to serve them, let them at least have a fellow-feeling of their Sufferings: since, as St. Gregory says, *He, whose Heart is toucht with Compassion, gives no less than he, who exercises Liberality towards the Poor: for the one gives his Wealth, and the other his Soul, which is much*

much more precious than all worldly Wealth. On which, before I finish this point, I must give you an important Advice, taken out of St. Augustin, who says, That of all the Works of Mercy, with which we may obtain pardon for our sins, there is none greater, or more prevalent, than willingly to pardon those, who have offended us. Saint Peter Chrysologus expresses the same thing in these words: Consider, Brethren, that you cannot be without sin, and that you always desire, your sins should be forgiven you: If you will then be forgiven, you must forgive, and so know, that your Happiness is in your own hands, and that in pardoning others you pardon your selves. St. Cesarius likewise says almost the same: If you have not wherewithal to redeem the Captives, or cloath the Naked, be at least very careful to banish out of your heart all kind of ill will against your Neighbor: Render not to your Enemies evil for evil; on the contrary love them, and pray for them. Living thus, ground your self securely on the Mercy and Promises of GOD, and fear not to say to him with Confidence: Give me, O Lord, for I have given: pardon me, because I have pardon'd.

§. 3.

Of the third, which is Prayer.

THE third, and perhaps the most necessary of the Works, that are call'd Satisfactory, is Prayer: This not only serves to fulfil the third part of Penance, which is Satisfaction; but is especially useful to obtain the first and most important, which is Contrition: since by Prayer GOD often infuses the Spirit of Contrition into

M

the

into the Souls of sinners : by Prayer they often obtain the Remission of their Offences : and we see in the Gospel, that on the sole consideration of their Prayer pardon was granted to the Publican, and the prodigal Child. Wherefore a Prophet exhorts us not to seek before GOD any other Remedies for our Evils. *Bring words with you,* says he, *and turn to the Lord, say unto him, Deliver us, O Lord, from our Iniquities, accept the Offering of our Hearts, which we make to thee with sincerity, and instead of the Sheep and Oxen, that are sacrific'd to thee, we will daily offer thee the Vows and Praises, which shall proceed from our mouths.* Thus is GOD treated with in Prayer ; by this is his Heart won : If he appears sometimes inexorable, and harder than the Adamant, 'tis only towards the proud and obstinate ; but he is softer and more pliable than Wax towards the humble and penitent. Never was any one seen to groan in this manner before GOD, but he felt at the same time in his Soul some sweet breathing of his Grace, and some assur'd pledge of his Clemency ; and to the end it may not be doubted, he would engage his Word for it in the Prophet Joel, who says: *Who-*
soever shall invoke the Name of the Lord, shall be saved.

But to the end this Prayer may the better ascend on high, there must be given her the two Wings, of which we have spoken, Fasting and Alms ; 'tis with them she flies swiftly, and stops not, till she is come before the Throne of GOD. These are Sisters, which must not be separated, they mutually assist, and lend the Hand to each other. Mercy, as St. John Climacus says, causes Prayer not to come empty into GOD's Presence : and if we shew Mercy to those, that stand in need of it,
 we

we shall encline GOD to shew Mercy to us. If you have a Love for Prayer, says this Saint, you will without doubt also have a Love for Mercy: for the first will cause GOD to hear you mercifully, because you have for his sake favorably heard your Neighbor. As for Fasting, 'tis certainly not a little helpful to Prayer, it disposes the Soul to do well, and discharging the Body of the Heaviness, caus'd by the Superfluity of Meats, renders it lighter to mount towards Heaven. Wherefore Prayer, join'd to Fasting, besides its becoming thereby more satisfactory, is much more pure, and spiritual: for, as the same Saint teaches us, *The Soul of him, that fasts, prays with Sobriety and Attention; but the Soul of an intemperate and sensual Person, is alway full of Imaginations, and evil Thoughts.*

Gradu. 28.
art. 40.

S. Jo. Ch.
mac. Gradu.
14. art. 27.

As then Fasting helps Prayer, so Prayer helps Fasting: since as St. Bernard says, *Prayer gives strength to fast, and Fasting obtains Grace to pray.* The Spirit of Prayer; and the Sweetness, found in it, animate our Hearts to mortify the Flesh; each of these Vertues undertaking, what is proper to it, in the Sanctification of Men. And to speak with St. Hierom: *By Fasting the Vices of the Body are cur'd, and by Prayer the Infirmities of the Soul.*

Thence we may conclude, that Prayer is not only one of the satisfactory Works, which is, what we principally pretend to shew in this place; but also, that it is meritorious, that 'tis impetratory, and that it causes and nourishes Devotion: By Prayer, as it is satisfactory, we discharge the Debts, contracted by our sins; as it is meritorious, we are rendred worthy by it to increase in Grace, and obtain Glory; as it is impetratory, we obtain by it, what we ask for with Humi-

lity; and as it is capable to produce in us the Spirit of Devotion, we receive by it new Lights, we begin to tast, how sweet the Lord is, good desires are renew'd and strengthened in our Hearts, Peace and Quietness are infus'd into our Souls, together with an extraordinary Courage and Zeal to embrace all occasions of doing good Works, which is, what is properly call'd Devotion.

These four so rare and excellent Fruits the vertue of Prayer brings with it, and consequently 'tis of extreme importance to exercise our selves in it with very much attention and perseverance. But since we shall speak of it more at large hereafter, I shall at this time content my self to remit you to a new reading of the Prayers and Considerations, you may have already seen, when we treated of Contrition; 'twill be good for you to go over them again, and entertain your self with them for some days both before and after Confession; they will suffice, if you make that Reflection on them, you ought, to excite in you a new sorrow for your sins, and new desires to satisfy GOD: And because there is nothing so powerful to make you enter into these Resolutions, as the Consideration of GOD's Benefits, and your own Sins, as we have already more fully in that place declar'd, I advise you more particularly to persist in the Contemplation of them. After you shall have employ'd some days in this Exercise, you may proceed to another sort of Prayer, which shall be hereafter taught you in the Book, we shall make for that purpose. And in this manner varying your Exercises, you will receive more Light, and serve GOD without difficulty or tiring, and with inexpressible sweetness and joy.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

A short Method of Confession for those, that confess often.

HAVING treated of Confession for such persons, as seldom confess, I have thought, it would not be inconvenient, to say something of the Examen and Preparation, to be us'd by those, who more frequently come to this Sacrament. These good Souls suffer divers Difficulties, and are often molested with scruples on this occasion: for on the one side believing, and certainly knowing, that they are not without sins, and on the other side not knowing how to declare them at the time of Confession, they are perswaded, they never confess well.

This perplexity may arise from two causes: first, from its being indeed a difficult matter for men to know themselves, and to search thoroughly into the Writings of their Consciences. 'Twas this, made a Prophet say: *Delicta quis intelligit?* PSAL. 18. v. 13. 14. *ab occultis meis munda me Domine.* Who knows all the sins, into which he falls? Cleanse me, O Lord, from the Offences, that are hidden from my Eyes and Understanding. The second cause is, for that the sins of the Just, who, as the Wise man says, *fall seven times a day*, PROV. 4. v. 16. are not easily known: they are ordinarily rather sins of Omission, than Commission, as we are wont to speak. For the understanding of which distinction 'tis to be observ'd, that all sins whatever happen one

of these two ways: either by committing some evil Act, as by robbing, killing, taking away our Neighbors Reputation, and the like; or by omitting some good Work, to which one is oblig'd, as by not producing Acts of the Love of GOD, by not fasting, not praying, &c. The first are so manifest, that they are easily known, because in the committing them some sensible Action must have preceded; the other, which consist not in doing, but in leaving undone, are more hardly discover'd: for who can see, what is not? And so 'tis not to be wondred, if devout persons, especially when they are simple, find not sometimes in them any sins, of which they may accuse themselves. They are happy enough to fall very seldom into those, we term sins of Commission, and that are easily taken notice of; and not discerning sufficiently the others, they approach the Confessional only with confusion, and affliction of mind.

To remedy their Troubles, I resolv'd to frame the following Memorial, which principally treats of these sorts of sins. And because they may be either against GOD, or our selves, or our Neighbor, we will divide them into three parts, according to the Negligences, one may be guilty of in respect of these three Duties. I know, that several of these Omissions are not sometimes so much as a Venial sin. They are nevertheless Imperfections, and Defects, and often not without sin, at least Venial: wherefore those, that aim at Perfection, ought not to neglect accusing themselves of them. I would not oblige them to do it always, for fear of being too long, and tiring a Confessor; but on solemn Feasts I should advise them to be more full and large in declaring things,

things. For other days, every one may take here, what he shall think most proper for the exciting in himself a sincere and true Sorrow, and the discharging of his Conscience.

The Order, to be kept in Confession.

HAVING said the ordinary Confession in general Terms, as is usually done, before they enter into the declaration of their sins in particular, they, who desire to confess well, may accuse themselves of four Defects, which are so common, that few persons escape being guilty of them.

First, That they come not to this Sacrament with such preparation, nor have us'd such care in examining their Conscience, as they ought to have done.

2. That they have not so great sorrow and contrition for their Faults, nor so true and firm a desire to amend, as they ought to have.

3. That they came not to the most holy Communion, with all the purity of Conscience, Respect, and Devotion, they should have brought to it; and that after their having communicated, they continu'd not in that Recollection of Mind, which the presence of so high a Guest requires.

4. That they have not seriously enough, nor with sufficient Zeal, endeavor'd the amendment of their Lives, and the daily advancing in our Lord's service; but on the contrary have continu'd in a certain Coldness, and Negligence misbecoming *Christians*. Or if instead of going forward in the way of Vertue, they have rather return'd to that of Vice; they may afterwards en-

ter more particularly into the declaration of their Faults, and keep the following order.

Against G O D.

We are oblig'd in respect of G O D to have in us these three Vertues, which are nam'd Faith, Hope, and Charity; and one may accuse himself in this manner of the Defects, men usually fall into concerning them. As for Charity, accuse your self of not having lov'd G O D, as you ought, with all your Heart, and all your Soul; and on the contrary of having too much lov'd the Creatures, and Vanities of this World, forgetting your Creator for them.

As touching Faith, that you have not had so firm a Faith, as you ought; nor have speedily enough rejected the evil thoughts, the Devil may have stirr'd up against it in your Understanding.

As for Hope, that you have not return'd strait to G O D, nor have had recourse to him in the Necessities and Troubles of this Life with such confidence, as you ought to put in him; on the contrary, that you have been excessively afflicted and discontented, which cannot proceed but from a criminal mistrust of his Power, and Goodness.

As touching the Intention, accuse your self, that in the Actions, which respect G O D's service, you have not had all the purity of Heart, that is requisite, not having done them for his sake alone, but sometimes to comply with Decency, or Custom, sometimes because they have been naturally pleasing to you, or thro' other the like Motives and Interests.

Accuse

Accuse your self also for having been negligent in embracing the good Inspirations, GOD has given you, and thereby often resisted the Holy Ghost for fear of enforcing your self, and taking a little pains. This is a very spiritual, and very secret Fault, but such an one, as deserves to have great Conscience made of it.

As also, for not having acknowledg'd GOD's Benefits, as you ought, of not having given him thanks enough for them, of not having sufficiently consider'd, and esteem'd them, so as to become more zealous in the service of him, from whom you receiv'd them.

Accuse your self also of having forgotten GOD, and of having been sometimes in such condition, as if he had been quite banisht out of your Heart, whereas you ought always to walk in his presence, and have him always before your eyes.

Accuse your self also of not having receiv'd with patience the Troubles, and Afflictions, which GOD has sent you: of not having acknowledg'd, that they came from his hand for your good, and of not having thank'd him for them. This is an important point, and fit to be particulariz'd, if you find in your self any Remorse of Conscience concerning it.

You may also without fear of lying, accuse your self of not having behav'd your self at Holy Mass, at Divine Service, in consecrated places, and in the presence of the most blessed Sacrament, with such Respect and Devotion, as you ought.

Against

Against ones self.

Man is compos'd of several parts: of the Body with all its Senses; of the Soul with all its Desires; of the Spirit with all its Faculties, which are the Understanding, Will, and Memory; and so he may have sinn'd against the Right and Order, which ought to be observ'd in the use of all these things.

Accuse your self then first of not having treated your Body in eating, drinking, sleeping, clothing, and all other things, with the rigor and severity you ought; but on the contrary of having been too indulgent to it, and too great a Lover of your self.

Of not having kept your Imagination, and exterior Senses within the strict bounds of their Duty; of having given them too much liberty; of having suffred them to wander extraordinarily in Conversations, and other things, that have diverted your Eyes, and Ears, and so having drawn into your Imagination useles and frivolous matters, which have hindred the Recollection of your Mind, and Attention in Prayer.

Of not having mortify'd your Passions, and tam'd your own Will, as you ought; on the contrary of having almost continually obeyd it, and always consented to its Irregularities; of not having been so humble in your Heart and Actions, as you ought; of not having esteem'd your self so vile and miserable, as you are; nor treated your self, as such; of having been slothful and negligent in your Prayers, of having often interrupted the course of them on slight

slight occasions, of not having perform'd them with the Attention and Recollection, you ought.

Against ones Neighbor.

Accuse your self, that you have not, according to G O D's Command, to love your Neighbor, as you would have others love you.

That you have not in his Necessities given him the Assistance and Relief, he might expect from you.

That you have not had such Compassion of his Miseries, nor pray'd so much to G O D for him, as you ought.

That you have not been sufficiently sorrowful for the Churches Calamities, occasion'd by Wars, Heresies, and other Evils, that rise up against her, and that you have not recommended her Necessities to G O D, as much as you could, and were oblig'd to do.

If you have Superiors, *accuse your self of not having obey'd them, and honor'd them, as you ought; — and if you have Children, Servants, or others under your Tuition and Government, accuse your self of not having instructed them, chastis'd them, or provided for them, what was necessary, and in fine of not having taken so much care of them, as you were oblig'd to.

Of Sins of Commission.

After you shall have thus accus'd your self of Sins of Omission, you may accuse your self of those of Commission, setting before you for this purpose the Ten Commandments of G O D, and

and the seven Mortal Sins ; and examining your Conscience upon them.

In fine you ought particularly to consider your Condition, to weigh the things, you are engag'd to by it, and accuse your self of all the Faults, you may have committed against the Duties, and Obligations, annex'to it, as a Religious Person of not having well kept his Vows, or his Rule, a Judge of taking Bribes ; and so of others.

And to conclude, you may end with these words, which are ordinarily us'd in the Church : I heartily accuse my self of all these sins, and of all others, into which I have fallen by my Thoughts, Words, and Actions. I confess before G O D my Fault, my Fault, my most grievous Fault, and desire of you, Father, Absolution and Penance,

T H E

THE
THIRD BOOK
OF
Holy Communion.

CHAP. I.

How we ought to prepare our selves for it.

HAVING already observ'd to you the most important things, that may dispose you to make a good Confession, I come now to what concerns holy Communion: since these two Sacraments have such a connexion, that the one ordinarily follows the other. 'Twould be very beneficial, and of great Edification for your Souls, to treat here of the Vertue and wonderful Effects of this adorable Sacrament: But because there are many things to be said on this subject, and this Memorial not permitting me to enter into matters, requiring so long a discourse, I shall content my self to entertain you with the Preparation, necessary for the approaching to this divine Mystery: since this Disposition is of such impor-

importance, that the Grace, given to him, who receives the Sacrament, will be proportionable to the state, in which he shall present himself to receive it. This Sacrament is of an infinit Vertue, as well because it contains in it JESUS CHRIST whole and entire, who is the Fountain of all Grace, as because it renders us Partakers of the Fruits and Merits of his Passion, which is of infinit value: but he must find Souls prepar'd, and the more excellent the Preparation shall be, the greater will the Grace be, we shall receive. He, who goes to the Sea to fetch water, takes as much, as the Vessel, he carries along with him, can contain. There will be no want of water in the Sea, which is an infinit Abyss; but he will have only according to the greatness of his Vessel. This is, what befalls all those, who come to this divine Sacrament, which is the Sea of all Graces, and thus is fulfill'd in them, what David says: *Open thy Mouth wide, and I will fill it.*

Psal. 80.
v. 10.

'Tis also a Maxim in Philosophy, That Causes act according to the Disposition, they find in the matter. The Fire burns easily in dry Wood, but not in green: because the one is dispos'd to receive the Heat and Flame, and the other is not. And thus as JESUS CHRIST, who is the general Cause of all Graces, is in this Sacrament, so he operates in the Souls of those, which receive him, conformably to the holy Dispositions, he finds in them. We daily see these Effects, and we know by experience, that they, who celebrate the holy Sacrifice, and communicate often, receive so much benefit by it, as they bring Zeal with them to it.

But 'tis not only the hope of enjoying the Fruits of this Sacrament, that should indure you
to

to prepare your self well for the reception of it, you ought to fear being rigorously punish'd, if you neglect it. 'Tis a general Rule in all the Sacraments of the Law of Grace, that, as they are highly profitable to those, who receive them worthily; so they are occasions of very great Evils to those, that approach them unworthily. An holy Doctor says to this purpose, that, as the Sun, Water, and Air very much help to make Plants grow, and fructify, when they are lively and well rooted; and that on the contrary, if they are dying, and not well rooted, these same Causes make them more speedily wither, or rot: so this most blessed Sacrament, which operates far more powerfully in Grace, than the Water, Sun, and Air do in Nature, causes those Souls, that are vigorous, and in which Charity has already taken root, to increase in Vertue; as on the contrary those, that have not these Qualifications, instead of profiting by their frequent Communion, are more hardned and blinded, not because of the Sacrament, which is altogether holy; but by their coming to it ill prepar'd. And this Effect is wholly agreeable to the nature of this Sacrament, which is of it self the spiritual Food of Souls: for as ordinary Meats sustain and nourish the Bodies, that are in health; and on the contrary are very prejudicial to those, which are sick, and fill'd with ill humors, and in this condition have more need of Abstinence, than Nourishment: the same does this Divine Sacrament, it gives Life, yea true Life to some, and occasionally gives Death to others, according to their different Dispositions.

You will ask me now, what the Preparation is, which this Mystery requires. I advise you to
cast

cast your Eyes on the Works of Nature, of which GOD is the Author, as he is of those of Grace. You will observe there, that, the more excellent natural Forms are, the greater Disposition they require. For example, the Food is digested and prepar'd in the stomach, for to go to the Liver; where 'tis converted into Bloud, which is a more noble Form, to be carry'd to the Heart; and in fine in this place it takes a more exquisit one, for to pass to the Brain, where it receives its last perfection. Thus it is purify'd, and refin'd, as I may say, in each of these parts, to acquire a better Form, and with so just and regular an Order, that the perfection of the preceding Form is a Disposition for that, which follows, and that, which is the Limit and end of the one, serves for a Preparation to the other. The same Conduct and Proportion is found in spiritual things, and particularly in the Sacraments, which require so much more Preparation in the Receivers, as they are of greater Excellence and Dignity. There are some, the worthy receiving of which requires only a single Repentance, and a sincere sorrow for having offended GOD, without any necessity of Confession: But this, of which we speak, being the highest and holiest of all, because GOD himself is present in it, there is another requir'd to serve as a Preparation for it, which is actual Confession, if the Soul finds it self guilty of any mortal sin. Besides this, there is Devotion requisite for the more holy receiving of it; but an effective and not common Devotion, accompany'd with an exceeding Reverence of this great Mystery, and arising from the Consideration of such things, as pertain to GOD. To put our selves in this state, we must at that time banish

banish from our Soul all the Imaginations, and all the Cares of worldly Affairs, to the end we may with more liberty, and without hindrance fix our Hearts on G O D. 'Tis not at so precious a time enough, that you be cleans'd from all sin ; but you must also endeavor to be void of all thoughts, and all sollicitousness, which may put the least obstacle to the Attention and Devotion, it requires of you. And this is wonderfully well represented to us by the solitariness of *Moyse*, when he went up on Mount *Sinai*, to speak with G O D. He was commanded to go up alone, and that there should not all about the Mountain be seen any Man, or Beast, great, or small ; and G O D added also to this solitariness a thick Cloud, and darkness, in which *Moyse* was to communicate with him ; to the end that being to discourse with G O D, the solitariness and Cloud might take from him the sight of all created things. You ought to imitate this solitariness, if you will worthily draw nigh to this Lord. You must go to him with an Heart so solitary, so recollected, and so abstracted from earthly things, so elevated and so absorpt in G O D, as if at that moment you thought, there was none but G O D and you in the World. Which is again represented by another Action of the same Prophet, when he put off his Shooes, to walk on the ground, where G O D made his Presence appear ; to let you understand, that, when you would go to him, you must strip your self of all the hurry of mortal and terrestrial things, with which you are usually surrounded.

Exod. 3.
v. 16.Exod. 3.
v. 5.

Such a Purity will seem extraordinary, or at least impossible, by reason of the Corruption of our Nature ; but 'tis not impossible to Charity,

N

or

Cant. 8. v. 6.

or divine Grace: *Love is powerful, as Death*, says the Spouse in the Canticles: to shew, that, as the death of the Body makes it become insensible to all worldly things, so perfect Charity in such manner possesses the Heart of man, and raises it up to GOD, as to make it forget all other things.

'Tis true, this spiritual Death, and this so general Disengagement is not given to all; 'tis a particular priviledge of the Spouse, that is, of those holy Souls, which deserve to be call'd by that name; the Church nevertheless proposes it to all, because of the Dignity of this Sacrament, which, being the Bread of Angels, requires the Purity of Angels in those, who eat of it. 'Tis your part then to employ all your Endeavors to obtain it; GOD will be contented with the share, you can have in it; and if you on your part do all, that lies in you, to forget all things at the time of Communion, and to approach it with Attention, and a sincere and actual Devotion, you have all reason to hope well of the divine Mercy. I believe nevertheless, 'twill be very fit to let you understand things more particularly; and if you desire to present your self to this holy Table in the Condition you ought, spare nothing to adorn your Souls with their richest Ornaments, which consist in the Qualities, I am going to explain to you.

CHAP.

C H A P. II.

Of the first thing, necessary to communicating well, which is Purity of Conscience.

K Now first, that every good Disposition comes from Heaven, and acknowledge with profound Humility, that all the Cares of Men and Angels are not able to give so perfect a Preparation, as is necessary to communicate well, unless GOD's Hand intervenes, and he particularly grants you his assistance. For, as none can dispose himself to receive any Increase of Grace without the help of Grace, so none can prepare himself to receive GOD, as he ought, unless GOD himself vouchsafe to prepare him. Address your self therefore to him with a contrite and humble Heart, and with fervent Desires, that he will be pleas'd to cleanse, and adorn the House, in which he condescends to lodge. When a King, making his Progress thro' the Country, is oblig'd to stay in some poor Village, he expects not, the Inhabitants should prepare his Lodging for him, because he knows, their Poverty is unable to do it; but he himself sends before hand his Furniture, with Officers, to see, that he be lodg'd and provided for conformably to his Greatness. If Kings act in this manner, you will have reason to beseech our Lord, who is *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, that since he is pleas'd to do you this incomparable Favor, to lodge in so poor a place, as your Breast, he will

Apoc. 19.
v. 16.

send before him his holy Spirit with all his Gifts and Ornaments, that by this means the Grace of GOD and his Almighty Power may prepare the House, into which his Goodness disdains not to enter.

This, being done, Brethren, the first Disposition for communicating well is Purity of Conscience; that is, that we be clean and exempt
Psalm 25. v. 6. from all mortal sin. *I will wash my hands,* says David, *amongst innocents, and I will compass thy Altar, O Lord.* He promises GOD to wash his hands, that is, the filthiness of his sins; and afterwards proposes to approach the Altar, that is, the Table of our Lord. And 'tis for this reason the Apostle uses these so terrible Threats, speaking to the Corinthians: *Whosoever shall eat this Bread, or drink the Chalice of our Lord unworthily, he shall be guilty of the Body and of the Blood of our Lord.* To teach us by these words, that they, who approach this Mystery with a polluted Conscience, commit as detestable an Offence, as that of the Jews, who crucify'd JESUS CHRIST, since both the one and the other horribly outrage his Body and Blood, tho' in a different manner.

1 Cor. 11.
v. 27.

But moreover, how can JESUS CHRIST be joyn'd with sin, and what can be the event of putting together two things, so contrary, and opposite, but the destruction of both? Things, which are of the same nature, are easily joyn'd, as Water with Water, and Iron with Iron; but two contrary things, as Fire and Water, cannot suffer one another, and the weaker must give way to the stronger. Since then by receiving this Sacrament you joyn your self with JESUS CHRIST, what can you expect from this Union,

nion, but the ruin of the weaker part? How can Goodness subsist with Wickedness, Purity with Filth, Humility with Pride, Sweetness with Wrath, and Cruelty with Clemency? So it is, when there is an intent of approaching CHRIST: for to be worthy of this divine Union, *Christians* must in some sort resemble him, and this is, what sin absolutely hinders, when it is not cleans'd by Penance.

All the sins, that are call'd Mortal, make this dreadful Divorce: but there are two, more dangerous than the rest, and which have a more formal opposition to the Qualities of this Sacrament: to wit, Hatred and Impurity. As to the first, the Eucharist is a Sacrament of Love and Union, since all the Faithful find in it one and the same Nourishment, and one and the same Spirit, which render it one and the same thing by Love. This is, what *St. Augustin* would signify to us, when he said, *That our Lord would leave* Tra. 26. in Joan. *us his Body and Blood in things, which, being compos'd of several parts, wholly separate from each other, are drawn together, and reduc'd into one sole Body, as are Bread and Wine, of which the one is made of several Grapes, and the other of several Grains of Corn.* To teach us, that this Sacrament, which is given us under these two species, produces the same thing in those, who receive it, making in them of one only Heart many Hearts by the Communication of one and the same Spirit. Now if this be true, as it cannot be doubted, can any thing be imagin'd more unreasonable, than to come to a Sacrament of Love and Union with an Heart, separated from that of ones Brother? Would not this be the same thing, as desiring a Chirurgeon to close a Wound for us, and

doing on our side all, we can, to keep it open? And would it not be an absolute want of Judgment, to take this spiritual Medicine, the Effect of which is to cure the Wounds of Ill Will, and unite divided Hearts, if one were in a firm Resolution to renounce this Grace, and break at the same time by Dissensions and Quarrels the Peace, and Union, it ought to cause.

If you desire then to avoid this Inconvenience, never take the boldness to approach this Table without a strong determination to put in effect, what our Lord ordains us, when he says: *If thou offrest thy Gift at the Altar, and there remembreſt, that thy Brother has any thing againſt thee, leave thy Gift before the Altar, and go and be reconcil'd with thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift.* 'Tis with this ſatisfaction, which a diſcreet Confeſſor will well regulate, and with as firm a Reſolution, that you ought to come to this heavenly Table. If you preſent your ſelf there without this Preparation, you can expect nothing elſe, but that the Maſter of the Feaſt will ſay to you: *Friend, how haſt thou entred in here, not having a Wedding-Garment,* that is, being without Charity, which, as the Apoſtle ſays, *covers a multitude of ſins?* And you have great reaſon to fear, that having nothing to answer to this Objection, our Lord will pronounce againſt you that ſevere Sentence: *Let him be bound hand and foot, and caſt into the fire.*

The other ſin, which is no leſs contrary to the Grace of this Sacrament, is Impurity: for this Sacrament, which contains the moſt holy Fleſh of our Saviour, form'd of the ſubſtance of the chaſteſt and pureſt of all Virgins, demands ſo great a Purity of Body and Mind, that the Saints have

Mat. 5. v. 23,
24.

Mat. 22.
v. 12.

1 Pet. 4. v. 8.

have believ'd, a nocturnal Illusion, caus'd by the Devil in a Dream, was a sufficient cause to abstain, unless Obedience, or the solemnity of some special Feast, oblig'd a man to do otherwise, or except after this Accident he found himself no less full of Devotion, and Zeal to communicate, than if it had not hapned. St. Bernard counsels in this case, even not to serve at the holy Mass, so much Purity does he judge this divine Mystery to require. For if St. Paul advis'd marry'd persons to abstain sometimes from the lawful use of the Marriage-Bed, that they might more devoutly apply themselves to Prayer, how much more ought they to be chaste, who by the participating the holy Sacrament receive GOD into their Bodies? And if in the old Law one dishonest Dream caus'd him, to whom this Dream hapned, to be excluded during a whole day from the Tents, and Company of GOD's people, with how much more reason ought it to separate us from so strict a Communication with GOD himself? 1 Cor. 7. v. 5.
Deut. 22.
v. 10.

But 'tis not only requisite, that you be not defil'd with any mortal sin, when you approach this Table, but you ought also to be exceeding careful to cleanse your self from venial sins: for tho' it be true, that sins of this nature do not wholly quench the Fire of Charity, 'tis notwithstanding certain, that they diminish the Fervor of Devotion, which is the first Disposition, this divine Mystery requires. Confess then before Communion, to cleanse your self of this sort of Offences, conceive at least for them all the Horror and all the Repentance you ought, or enter into some pious Exercises, to recover by this means the actual Devotion, which venial sin

had made you lose. Those, that fail to do some one of these things, cannot be excus'd from a criminal Negligence, which is a very considerable venial sin, and will undoubtedly make them lose much of the fruit and sweetness of this Sacrament, which is an effect, they ordinarily feel, who approach it with this Preparation. But as for those, who have sinn'd mortally, besides the sincere Repentance, with which their Soul must be toucht, there is requir'd actual Confession on pain of a new mortal sin, as the Council of Trent has expressly defin'd.

CHAP. III.

Of the second thing, necessary to Communicating well, which is Purity of Intention.

THE second thing, which is necessary to communicate worthily, is Purity of Intention; that is, to do this great Action for the end, it ought to be done for. For, as the End is the principal Circumstance of all our Works, 'tis also that, we ought principally to consider in them, especially in this, which is of far greater importance than all others, lest we pervert GOD's designs, and use that for one end, he has instituted for another. This Doctrine is of consequence, and that it may be the better understood, 'twill do well to declare the different ends, to which those have respect, who communicate worthily, and those who communicate unworthily: for so that, which you ought to aim at will be more easily known. There

There are some Priests so unhappy, as to be mov'd principally to celebrate Mass for the sake of the temporal Profit, they expect to receive by it. These are like those two Sons of *Aaron*, who Levit. 10. v. 1. offered Sacrifice to GOD with strange Fire: since 'tis not the Fire of divine Love, which induces them to do their Duty, but the Heat of Covetousness and dishonest Gain. Such have great reason to dread the punishment, that befel those sacrilegious Wretches, who were in a moment devour'd by the Fire, which came forth of the Sanctuary. There are some Lay-Persons, who come to communion only for fear of punishment, as many wicked *Christians*, who never approach our Lords Table but at *Easter*, and that with as much Repugnance, as if they were going to the Gallows. Those ought to consider, that, as none entered in to the Feast of King *Assuerus* with base Eth. 4. v. 2. and unseemly Apparel, so they by these base and servile Dispositions render themselves unworthy of this heavenly Food; what was instituted thro' Love, ought to be taken with Love; and 'tis unreasonable to receive with the spirit of a Slave a Present, which GOD makes us with the goodness of a Father. There are some, that communicate, to be like others, tho' they find not in themselves any hunger after this divine nourishment; nor know, what it is to amend their Lives, or bring to so holy an Action the necessary Preparations: and others (whom I place almost in the same Rank) communicate only thro' custom. They have prescrib'd themselves certain set-days of coming to the Altar, at which they will not fail; and this alone makes all their Devotion. They certainly deceive themselves, and if they were truly devout, they would consider, that,

that, tho' this is a good Custom, 'tis not yet good to communicate only for Customs sake, but that there are other Dispositions requisite, without which the Fruits of Communion are not receiv'd. There are others in fine, who come to communicate, thinking to find in it some spiritual Gift, and to seek in the Sacrament some sensible Devotion: this is the utmost end, they propose, and in this their Devotion is false, because it looks not to the end, it ought to aim at, which is to embrace the Cross and Mortification of J E S U S CHRIST, and to make them more ready, and fervent in serving G O D.

None of these Motives are direct, they are By-ways and false Doors, by which they rather steal, as Thieves, than receive, as faithful Servants, their Masters Favours. Let us enter then by the Doors, by which the Saints have entred, and let us endeavor to conform our selves to the Intentions, they had, which were not all of the same sort, as St. Bonaventure teaches us in these words: *The Intentions of those, who communicate, are different, and numerous. Some are induc'd to it by the Love of G O D alone, that they may finer draw their Belov'd into the bottom of their Souls, to enjoy him, comfort themselves with him, and become more enflam'd with his Love. Others are excite'd to it by the knowledge, they have of their own Weakness, and seek to be cur'd of their Infirmities by the assistance of this heavenly Physician. Others are touch'd with the remembrance of their sins, and hope by this great Sacrifice, and by this saving Host, to obtain pardon of them; Others, seeing themselves press'd with some Temptation, or some extraordinary Affliction, have recourse to this Sacrament, that by the virtue of the Almighty they may be deliver'd from their Troubles,*
and

and defended from their Enemy; others desire some particular Grace; and address themselves to this dear Son, to whom his Father will refuse nothing, for the obtaining their Request; others burn with a zeal of testifying to GOD their acknowledgment of his Benefits, and they offer him this same Son, who is given to them, knowing, that they cannot present him any thing more agreeable than this Cup of Blessing, which he has communicated to us: Others have a design to praise GOD and his Saints, since we cannot of our selves more worthily honor them, than by offering to GOD this Sacrifice of Praise in remembrance of them. Others in fine celebrate and communicate, being induc'd to it thro' an earnest desire of their Neighbors Salvation, or by the Compassion, they have of their Brethrens Adversities, being assur'd, that there is nothing so efficaciously pleads the Cause of the Miserable, or so powerfully intercedes before the Face of the Father for the Living and the Dead, as the precious Blood of his Son, which he has shed both for the one and the other.

In this manner does this illuminated Doctor shew us the most part of the good Intentions, we can have: Chuse that, which shall most affect you, and make it, if you please, the Object of your Devotion. But I counsel you something greater, and more worthy a Christian zeal. Stay not upon one alone, consider them all, as the admirable Fruits of the holy Sacrament, and propose to your self, with the assistance of your divine Physician, the obtaining of them all. Know nevertheless, that your principal end, and the most proper to this divine Mystery, is to procure, that by receiving JESUS CHRIST, who is conceal'd in it, you may receive into your Souls his Spirit, by which you may be transform'd into him, and brought to live,

Gal. 2. v. 20.

live, as he did : that is, with the Charity, Humility, Patience, Obedience, Poverty of Spirit, Mortification of the Flesh, and Contempt of this World, which appear'd in him. 'Tis thus, we spiritually eat and drink JESUS by changing our selves into him, and making our selves one and the same thing with him thro' the Imitation of his Life, as he did, who said : *I live, yet not I; but CHRIST liveth in me.* See, what ought to be our principal End, joyn'd with doing that, he has commanded us, which is to renew at our communicating the Memory of his Death, and give him infinit Thanks for the inestimable Benefit of our Redemption.

CHAP. IV.

Of the third thing, necessary to Communicating well, which is actual Devotion.

THE third Disposition, which holy Communion requires, is actual Devotion, and the better to understand this, you must know, that this Sacrament, as well as all the rest, has one Effect common, and another proper to it self : The common is to give Grace, as all the other Sacraments of the Law of Grace do ; but that, which is particular to this, is a new strength, and new vigor in doing good Works, and a new taste of heavenly things, mixt with a great sweetness, experimented by those, who receive it. For as the corporal Food, we take, has not only the property to preserve our Lives, but together with

with the pleasure we have in eating, gives us also strength and liveliness : so this divine Meat not only maintains our spiritual Life with the Grace, it gives us ; but fortifies also the Spirit, and makes us feel inexplicable delight, thro' a secret Vertue, which accompanies it. *St. Thomas* says, that this 3 Part. q. 79. art. 1, & 2. sweetness is so great in those, whom the Holy Ghost has purify'd, and whose souls know how to relish true Pleasures, that no words are sufficient to express it : nor is it to be doubted, since spiritual delights are found there in their source, which is our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

For the enjoying then of this great Benefit is actual Devotion requir'd : for since there must be some proportion between the form, and that, which serves as a Disposition and Preparative to the form, there is nothing so advantageous for the augmenting Devotion, as Devotion it self : As we see by experience in Wood, which the hotter and dryer it is, is so much the fitter to burn, because heat and dryness are the two Qualities of Fire.

But if you ask me, what actual Devotion is, I can no way better explain it to you, than by telling you, that 'tis like Angel-water, which, being extracted out of divers Flowers, retains something of all their favors. For this Devotion is an ardent and affectionat motion of the soul, compos'd of several holy Desires, and divers spiritual Affections, of which it is full, when it comes to this Sacrament. *St. Ambrose* declares them, when preparing himself for Mass, he makes his Address to JESUS CHRIST in these words: *What ought, O Lord, to be my Contrition, my Sorrow for my Faults, the Fountain of my Tears? What ought in fine to be the Reverence, Fear, Chastity of Body, and Purity of Mind,*

Mind, which I am oblig'd to bring to thy Altar, when I am going to celebrate this Divine Mystery, where thy Flesh is truly eaten, and thy Blood truly drunk, where the lowest things are joy'd with the highest, where the Angels are present, and where Thou thy self art as yet an unspeakable manner both the Priest and the Sacrifice? Who, O Lord, can worthily perform this Mystery, except Thou rendrest him worthy? In fine to approach this adorable Sacrament with the Devotion, of which I speak, and to correspond on your part, as much as your weakness can permit, with its Holiness and Dignity, bring always to it a very great Respect, a profound Humility, much Love, and Confidence, but above all assure your self, that you will be so much the more worthy this heavenly Bread, as you shall be more hungry, and desirous to be satisfy'd with it. The excellence of this sacred Food requires no less than all these several Affections, and for the making them spring up in your Heart, the Considerations, I am going to set before you, will not perhaps be unprofitable.

§. I.

In the first place, to obtain Fear and Respect, consider the Greatness of him, who is enclosed in this Sacrament: for under this sacred Vail is conceal'd his Divine Majesty, who created the World, who preserves and governs it, in whose presence the Pillars of Heaven tremble, before whom all Nature lies prostrate, whom the Stars of Heaven incessantly praise, whose Beauty strikes Admiration and Astonishment into the Sun and Moon, in whose sight the celestial Spirits themselves are not without spot, in comparison of whom

Job 26. v. 11.

Job 38. v. 7.

Job 4. v. 18.

whom this vast Frame of the World, which appears so wonderful, is, to use the Wise mans words, but like a drop of Morning-Dew, or the least grain of the Ballance. And after this can you avoid being seiz'd with Awe and Reverence, seeing with the Eyes of Faith so Majestick a Greatness abase it self to you.

I might here add something concerning the severity of his Justice, the depth of his Judgments, with the Horror, he has of wicked men, and their wickedness: but I am contented only to represent to you, what you ow to this sovereign Majesty, and to shew not sinners alone, but even the Just themselves, how great reason they have to fear, when they approach it. No man ought to flatter himself on this occasion, or vainly think himself secure, because of the Vertue of this Sacrament, which is the Life of Souls. 'Tis true, that it gives Life, but 'tis no less true, that it gives also Death to those, who prophane it by approaching it unprepar'd. The Children of *Israel*, 1 Kin 4 v. 3. being at the point to give Battle to the *Philistins*, sent for the Ark into their Army, hoping by the presence thereof to gain the victory over their Enemies; but the success was quite different from their expectation: for this sacred Pledge was so far from rendring them victorious, that on the contrary they lost the Battle, all GOD's People was defeated, the Ark was taken, and carry'd away by the Infidels: so that it seem'd to have come into the Camp, only to render their loss the greater. They believ'd, that the Ark would be their Preservation, and it was their Ruin. The same thing besel that great Favorit of *Assuerus*, nam'd *Aman*: Queen *Ester* invited Ester. 7. him to the Banquet, she had prepar'd for the King:

1 Cor. 11.
v. 28, 29.

1 Kin. 6.
v. 19.

Josh 3. v. 4.

King: this the proud man esteem'd a Mark of Favor; but he foresaw not, that his Death would be the conclusion of this Banquet, and that from the Table he should be sent to the Gallows. Wherefore the Apostle, speaking to the Faithful, cries out, and says to them: *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup: for whosoever eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh his own Damnation, not discerning our Lords Body.* If then so great Respect was requir'd to the Ark of the Old Testament, which was but the Figure of this divine Sacrament, there must without doubt be incomparably more Purity and Reverence due to the Sacrament it self, in which G O D personally resides. The *Bethsamites* heretofore lookt with curiosity into the Ark, and fifty thousand of them dy'd to expiate that Offence. What then shall become of those, who presume to receive irreverently, what this Ark did but represent? When this Ark open'd a Passage to the *Israelites* thro' the Waters of *Jordan*, *Joshua* commanded them not to come near it, but to leave always at least the distance of two thousand Cubits between the Ark and the People, for fear G O D should slay them. If *Joshua* treated in this manner the Ark of the Lord, what must we do to receive in us the Lord of the Ark? Ought not this to terrify you, if thro' a serious Reflection on your self you consider, that you are by Nature nothing, and by Sin less than nothing, since sin is less than nothing? But those particularly ought to tremble, who having so often, as the Prophet speaks, *reduc'd themselves to nothing* by their Abominations against G O D, dare lodge him in an heart, which has been the Nest of Serpents and Basilisks.

Humble

Humble your self then, as much as you can, by these Considerations, and come to your Fathers House with Tears in your Eyes, and sorrow in your Heart, saying with the prodigal Child: *Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and against thee, and now I am not worthy to be call'd thy Son: Account me therefore as one of thy hired Servants.* Put your self in the condition of the Publican in the Gospel, who durst not approach the Altar, nor lift up his Eyes to Heaven; and imitating your Breast, say with him: *God be merciful to me a Sinner.* Or else in the state, a Woman would put her self into, who, having been guilty of Disloyalty to her Husband, should present her self to him on his condescending after such a Fault to take her again into his House: You may well judge, how great her Confusion would be, if she had but any Remains of Modesty, when she should on one side consider the Crime, she had fallen into, and on the other the Tenderness of her Husband, who rejected her not, after she had so heinously offended him. Considering then the extream disproportion, there is between you and the heavenly Bridegroom of your Souls, you cannot doubt but he exercises a far more admirable sweetness, when in the holy Sacrament he receives you into his House, to his Table, and even into his Arms, after your having so basely by your sin betray'd him, and abandon'd your self to do all the Will of his Enemy.

Luk. 15.
v. 18, 19.

Luk. 18.
v. 13.

These are the Considerations, which may frame in your Soul some part of the Respect, you ow to this divine Sacrament; but since 'tis reasonable, you bring also to it no less Love and Confidence, for to obtain them, consider on the other side, that, as much Hatred as this Lord of Majesty and Justice has for sin, so much Goodness and Mercy he has for Sinners. These were the divine Qualities, that brought him down from Heaven, that cloth'd him with our Flesh, that made him undertake so many Journeys to seek for sinners, that made him resolve to eat with them, and oblig'd him to say, that their salvation was his Food, and his Delight. 'Twas for them, he fasted, travell'd up and down a foot, watcht, rose up early, and suffred innumerable Contradictions and Persecutions from the World. 'Twas for their sakes he spent whole days in preaching, and nights in praying for their Necessities; 'twas for them, that the Bowels of his Mercy were always open, and that he never repell'd any of those, who address'd themselves to him, tho' they were rejected by others. In fine he was press'd with so violent a desire to save them, and remedy their Evils, that to redeem and cure them, he consented to be fastned to a Cross between two Thieves, and to shed for them even the last drop of his Blood. Does it not seem impossible to you for this Goodness to proceed any farther? But our Saviour would extend it beyond his Life. Departing out of this World, he left us another Remedy and another Refuge by the Institution of this most august Sacra-

Sacrament, in which he himself is present: By this means, you touch him; you possess him, and enjoy the Benefits, which his Presence and his Virtue produces; and thence you daily experience, that the same cause, which oblig'd him to dy, oblig'd him also to institute his Sacrament: For as his Love alone made him resolve to come down from Heaven, and deliver himself into the hands of sinners, so the same Love makes him continually give himself to the World by this amorous Invention, and often to sinners, as guilty as those, that depriv'd him of his Life.

'Tis then very clear, that the cause of this great Work could on his side be nothing but his immense Charity; and on ours, but our extreme Necessities; on our part only our Misery, and on his only his Mercy. And thus we see, that this divine Sacrament is the common Remedy of the Just and Sinners, that 'tis not only Food for the Healthy, but Physick also for the Sick, that 'tis not only the Life of the Living, but the Resurrection likewise of the Dead. And according to *St. Augustin*, this heavenly Bread not only sustains those, who live, but sometimes also, raises again those, that have lost their Life.

Who then can forbid you the participation of this Mystery? 'Tis an Hospital, which the divine Mercy has erected with royal Magnificence, endow'd and founded with the purest Bloud of **JESUS CHRIST** for the relief of all, that are sick. Will you then think your selves excluded, because you are infirm and miserable? on the contrary you ought for this very reason to have recourse to it. If you are afflicted with any great Disease, 'tis there, you will be cur'd. If you are weak, you will there obtain strength.

If you are blind, you will there receive sight. If you are poor, you will there find Riches. If you are hungry, you will there be satisfy'd. And in fine if you are naked, and bare of the Graces and Vertues, that are necessary for you, you will there again be cloth'd with them.

Some, who do not sufficiently prize this divine Sacrament, and either know not, or will not know its Nature and Conditions, keep themselves, and others from it on frivolous pretences of their Infirmities, and Weaknesses: but they must understand, that it was instituted, not only to serve for Nourishment to those, who are in health, but for Physick also to those, that are sick; not only to comfort and strengthen the Just, but to give Confidence also and Health to Penitents. Those, who find themselves most depressed, have greatest need of it; and consequently the Weak can much less subsist without it, than the strong: Those, whose Souls are sound and vigorous, may longer persist in Good without this particular Assistance: but what can they do without it, who have their soul always as it were on the edge of their Lips, who are so weak, and void of strength, that, if they turn their Eyes but never so little from GOD, they see themselves ready to fall and perish? 'Twas of these persons particularly, that our Saviour had Compassion, when speaking in a Figure of this great Mystery, he said: *If I suffer them to depart fasting, they will faint by the way: for some of them are come from far.* For as in that occasion those Hearers of JESUS CHRIST, who came from the remotest places, must have been in more apparent danger of fainting, than those, which had not undergone the toil of so long a Journey: so in the

Mar. 8. v. 3.

the course of this life, the weakest, and those, which have farthest to travel, that they may arrive at the Perfection of divine Love, are without doubt expos'd to more pressing Dangers. And since this living Bread was ordain'd from Heaven to support the Weak, 'tis not a Rashness, but an holy and wholsom Resolution, for the sick to have recourse to the Physician, and receive from his Goodness the Remedy, he has prepar'd for him with so much Love, by the effusion of all his Blood.

For my part I am firmly perswaded, that one of the greatest Faults, men can commit, and of which they shall render the most rigorous Account at the day of Judgment, will be that, which they commit against the Blood of JESUS CHRIST in not making use of the admirable Remedies, that are found in his Church by the Merit of his precious Blood, of which the Eucharist is undoubtedly the greatest. If a King had built a magnificent Hospital for the reception of all sick persons, and had furnish'd it with all things necessary for the curing of their Diseases; and, after he had with abundance of care and charge finish'd this great Work, there should not any one be found, that would come thither to be cur'd, would not this Prince think himself very unhappy in having bestow'd his labor for such slothful Souls, and so negligent of their own Health? Doubt not, but the King of Heaven will conceive the same Indignation, if having presented us with a Remedy, which cost him so dear, and which he has compounded of his own Blood, he shall see us neglect it, and so, as much as in us lies, frustrate his designs, and render all his pains unprofitable. Doubt not, but this Contempt

Luk. 14.
v. 24.

will make you fall into a sin, like that, which our Lord describ'd in the Parable of the Feast, in which the Guests, that were invited, refus'd to come, and fear his pronouncing against you that terrible Sentence of Excommunication. Verily, I say to you, that none of those, which are called, shall tast of my Supper.

What reason can you alledge, that may be sufficient to excuse you? If you say, that you are sinners, know you not, that you cease to be sinners when you begin to love Justice, and to be sorry for your Offences? and know you not, that, as St. Hieron expresses it, past sins damn you not, if they are no longer pleasing? If you say, that you are fallen, and that your fall is irrecoverable, altho' your selves, it will not be so, if you are troubled for your misfortune, and stretch out your hand to be rais'd up again. You have the same reason, if you say, that you find your selves unworthy to approach so high a Mystery? Do you believe, that there is any one truly worthy? and would not our Saviour therefore communicate himself to the little ones and imperfect, that his sweetness and love might thereby have greater lustre? Thus you see, you are so far from offending GOD by coming to him, that you would highly offend him by refusing to make use of a Remedy, which he has ordain'd for such, as you are. These are the principal Considerations, with which you may stir up in your Soul the ardent Desire, you ought to have, that you may with profit be a partaker of this great Mystery.

§. 3.

But there is a third Disposition, requisite for the approaching to this holy Table, which is an ardent Desire and great Hunger for this heavenly Bread, and for the obtaining it there is no better means, than to consider the Effects of this divine Sacrament, and the Affections it excites in those Souls, which receive it devoutly. For your Instruction in this important point, you ought to know, that, as **G O D** by his goodness has oppos'd to the first man, who was the cause of all our Evils, a second man, to wit, **JESUS CHRIST**, who is the Original of all our Good: so to the fatal Fruit of that forbidden Tree, which destroy'd us, he has oppos'd an heavenly Food in this holy Sacrament, which serves for a Remedy to all our Miseries. And as by the Obedience Rom. 5. v. 19. of the second Man we were deliver'd from all the unhappiness, which had befallen us thro' the Disobedience of the first: so all the Evils, which that poyson'd Meat had caus'd us, have happily found their Cure in this august Sacrament. This then is a sovereign Antidote, that the divine Wisdom has provided, to deliver all men from the Poyson, with which the old Serpent had infected them. And therefore to comprehend the abundance of the Benefits, which are liberally communicated to us by this saving Food, we need only compute the Calamities, which that other fatal Meat had brought upon us, and be fully sensible, that **G O D** has chang'd the Curse into a Blessing: since speaking of that first Fruit, he said: *In the day, thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt dy.* Gen. 2. v. 17. And of the second: *He, that shall eat of this*
O 4 Bread,

Bread, shall live for ever. Another means is attentively to meditate, what it contains: for the Flesh of JESUS CHRIST is really there, which, being united to the divine Word, is Partaker of all its Advantages, as a red hot Iron partakes of all the properties of the Fire, that heats it. This made St. *John Damascen* say, That the Word of the eternal GOD, which gives Life to all things, being united to human Flesh, makes that Flesh also give Life: And this it is, which leaves us no room to doubt, but that this Sacrament contains all the Vertue, which is in JESUS CHRIST, since that in it is receiv'd the Flesh of JESUS CHRIST, which, being united to his Divinity, enjoys all the Greatness and all the Power of it.

Admire then, what is wrought in you, when this divine Lord comes to you, consider, that he comes to honor you with his Presence, to pour on you the Ointment of his Grace, to cure you by his Mercy, to wash you with his Blood, to raise you by his Death, to illuminate you with his Light, to warm you with his Love, to caress you with his Sweetness, to unite himself to your Soul, and become her Bridegroom, to render you Partakers of his Spirit, and of all, that he purchas'd for you on the Cross by offering up that precious Blood, which he gives you. Know, that by this divine Sacrament your past sins are pardon'd, you are strengthened against those, that are to come, your Passions are weakned, your Temptations are diminish'd, your Devotion is awaken'd, your Faith receives new light, and your Charity new Heat, your Hope is augmented, your Weakness is supported, your Strength is repair'd, your Conscience is fill'd with Joy, you are made

made Partakers of JESUS CHRIST's Merits, and receive Pledges of eternal Life. 'Tis this Bread, that gives Courage to the Weak, that entertains the Travellers, that eases those, who are fallen, that animates the Cowards, that gives Arms to the Valiant, that rejoyces the Sorrowful, that comforts the Afflicted, that instructs the Ignorant, that heats the Lukewarm, that awakens the Sluggards, that cures the Sick, and that, being the most common, is also the most assured Remedy for all your Necessities. Since then this adorable Sacrament produces such wonderful Effects, and since the love of him, that gives it to us, is so excessive, who will not desire such great Riches, and who will not hunger for so excellent a Food?

Let not then the Consideration of your vileness and unworthiness keep you back from this sacred Table: for tho' this Sacrament is infinitely majestic and holy, you ought nevertheless to remember, that this Treasure was discover'd for the Poor, that this Medicine was ordain'd for the sick, that this Relief was prepar'd for the necessitous, and this great Feast provided for the hungry. This Sacrament is the Bread of Angels; but 'tis also the Bread of Penitents: 'tis the Nourishment of the Healthy; but 'tis also the Remedy of the Infirm: 'tis the Delicacy of Kings; but 'tis also the Food of the Populace: 'tis the strong Meat of men; but 'tis also the Milk of Children. Thus 'tis all things to all men; and none, how imperfect soever he is, ought to abstain from this divine Medicine, if he desires to be cur'd. *The whole have no need of a Physician, Mat. 9. v. 12. but only the sick.* And if JESUS CHRIST came principally into the World for these, 'tis also

Agg. 2. v. 7.

also particularly for these, that he gives himself in this Sacrament. See then by this, with what Hunger, with what Desires, and with what Joy you ought to sigh after him, who comes to heap on you so many Favors. Remember the Longing of the ancient Patriarchs for the coming of him, whom you receive. Remember, how they pierc'd the Heavens with their Cries, requesting aloud, that he would be pleas'd to come down: and for this reason call'd him *The Desire of all Nations*. He, who comes into your soul, is the same, that came into the World, and he comes to do nothing else there, but what he did for all the World. When he came into the World, he gave the World the Life of Grace. He comes likewise into your soul, only to give it the same Life. This being so, why will ye not desire him with as much fervor, as the Prophets did? Consider the Zeal, with which the Apostles expected the coming of the Holy Ghost, the earnest Prayers, and fervent sighs, with which they request'd him. You ought to send up no less towards Heaven for the obtaining JESUS CHRIST's Presence, since you receive by it the Holy Ghost, tho' in a different manner. Imagin also, that I may use a more familiar Comparison, the Impatience, with which a Woman, over-charg'd with Children, expects the Return of her Husband out of the *Indies*, in hopes he will bring her great Riches, and that in his company she shall find Rest, Comfort, Honor, and a Remedy for all her Miseries. And judge, whether your Desires ought not to surpass hers, since you firmly hope to receive within you the chaste and sweet Bridegroom of your souls, who comes not from the *Indies*, but descends from Heaven with all his Riches,

Riches, to bestow on you much more than the whole World can afford. These and such-like Considerations, with which the fervor of your Devotion may inspire you, will help you to obtain the Dispositions necessary for approaching to this Sacrament.

CHAP. V.

That Time ought to be taken for the putting ones self in all these Dispositions.

THU prepare your self then in this manner, so that you might take some days before your Communion, in which freeing your Mind from all other Thoughts, you may both reflect at leisure on all these Considerations, and also cleanse your Conscience by a serious Examination of the Contrition, and Sacramental Confession of your sins. For we cannot sufficiently blame the rashness of some Priests, who without any previous Preparation go, in what condition soever they are, to celebrate the holy Sacrifice. From vain and unprofitable Discourses, from immoderate Laughters, from the Throng of secular Affairs, they pass immediately (full of Distractions) to the Altar, and make no scruple of coming to our Lords Table to eat there the Bread of Angels with the same Disposition and Indifference, as if they were eating a bit of common Bread; which is an intolerable Irreverence. We need seek no other cause of their little progress in Vertue after their having so many years

years us'd this divine Medicine: for if they had at every Mass, they celebrate, receiv'd some increase of Grace, as it happens to those, who are worthily dispos'd for it, they would have stor'd up in themselves a Treasure of Graces, whereas we now see them still the same, and after twenty years serving at the Altar, they continue as sensual, as they were, and sometimes worse. How lamentable is this Misfortune! Can we see any thing more to be fear'd, than to come every day to the Fountain of Life, to the Banquet of Angels, to the soveraign Remedy of all our Evils, and having persisted thus a long time, to be found at last as dry, as insensible, and with as much weakness, as at first? These unfaithful Ministers of our Lord are exceedingly to blame; but there is an infinit number of evil *Christians*, that deserve no less Reprehension, who, after they have abandon'd themselves to all manner of Vices, come once a year to Confession, and having scarce ended their Vomit of innumerable Abominations, go incontinently from the Priests feet to take their place at our Lords Table, and there eat the Bread of Angels, which (if it were possible for us) we should receive only with Angelical Purity. Were it not fit to employ first some days in pacifying G. O. D, and in watering and washing with Tears the place, in which he is to be lodg'd? Were it not reasonable to dispose ourselves by a vigil of labor and sorrow for the Joy of so great a Festival, and not to solemnize it without a great deal of Preparation? When the time was come, in which G. O. D would give the Law to his People, *Moses* commanded them to prepare themselves three days before, to wash their Cloths, and abstain from the company of their

Exod. 19.
v. 10, 11.

their Wives. None can doubt, but we are oblig'd to do much more for the receiving G O D himself, who gives us not only his Law, but his Grace, which is far more than his Law; and do not we fear, having our Imagination wholly fill'd with our sins, being yet wholly defil'd and polluted with our Filthiness, to approach a Mystery of so great Purity, and receive a Lord, whose Majesty is so high and elevated?

This is a great Abuse, and no less dangerous for being common; 'tis of importance to consider it well, and to weigh it, as it deserves, not with the weight of *Canaan*, which is false, but with the weight of the Sanctuary: that is, according to the Judgment of G O D and the Sentiments of the Saints. Let those, who desire to perform their Duty, read St. *Cyprian's* Sermon against the Christians, that fell into Idolatry, and they shall see, how vehemently this Father reprehends this Contempt and Boldness. Speaking of some Believers, who in a short time after their Sacrificing to Idols presented themselves to the holy Communion, he says thus: *Returning from the Altars of the Devil, and having their hands still polluted with these infamous Sacrifices, they approach the holy Sacrament. And tho' it is written, that none should be so presumptuous, as to eat of this Meat, unless he be clean and pure, for that otherwise 'twill cause his Death, yet are they audacious enough to receive our Lords Body, not having digested the Flesh, that was offer'd to Idols; but having their Mouths still stinking of that abominable Food: In which, I may say, their Hands and Mouth commit a more detestable Sin than that, into which they fell, when they renounc'd his Worship and Religion.* These are the words of St. *Cyprian*. Consider, whether he could have expressed

proft himself in more terrible Terms. Yet may judge by the Discourse of this Saint, what he would have said of the Prophanations, which daily happen in the use of our Divineft Mystery.

You will tell me, that these Sinners are reconcil'd to GOD by Confession; I suppose so; but tho' they may be truly restor'd to JESUS CHRIST'S Favor, is it fit, they should receive him at the same Instant, and with the same Mouth, that is but just come from vomiting forth so much Filthiness, without employing some time to bewail their Sins, and cleanse their Consciences, that they may approach him with greater Piety? *Mary*, Sister of *Moses*, remain'd seven days without entering into the Camp of GOD'S People, tho' she had repented of her Fault, and was pardon'd. *Abshon*, the Son of *David*, was banish't three years from his Father's Palace, tho' he had forgiven him the Murder, committed on the Person of his Brother *Amon*. Now if this Prince, after his being assur'd of his Father's Favor, was oblig'd in some sort to expiate his Crime by a three years Absence, would any Injury be done to these Criminals by deferring for three days their Admission to the Communion, after having so cruelly offended their Heavenly Father, and so often by their sins murder'd and crucify'd his only begotten Son.

You will tell me again, there are some so frail, that they cannot, even for so short a time, forbear offending GOD, and that 'tis therefore better to receive them speedily to the holy Table, for fear they render themselves unworthy by new Faults. I answer this, that if these are venial sins, they exclude them not from this Grace, since,

Num. 12.
v. 14.

2 Kin. 12.
v. 33.

since, as the Scripture says, *The just man falleth seven times a day*; and 'tis not hard to apply a Remedy to this Evil. But if you speak of mortal sins, and believe them not capable to abstain from them so little a while, what Danger can be imagin'd more strange than this, and what Disposition more abominable, than to dare communicate with so wavering and corrupt a Conscience, that one cannot promise himself to pass three days without sinning mortally? And where is then that firm Purpose, which ought to be engraven in the Souls of all Christians, never to offend GOD, tho' for the preservation of Life it self? Where is the love of GOD, which fears sin above all things? Banish from your Minds this dangerous apprehension. The strength of Grace is not so little, nor will you so easily fall into mortal sins, if you on your side use some moderate Care to avoid this Misfortune. GOD will grant you the Grace to preserve you from them not only for some dayes, but also for whole years, and even for all your Life, if you invoke his assistance; and he never fails those that seek it. 'Tis true, that to oblige carnal and sensual Men to abstain from Evil, tho' for so short a time, is like the turning a great River out of its natural Current, which it has kept for many Ages. Whatever Industry you use to drain it from its ancient Chancel, at the first gap, it finds, it breaks thro' all its Ditches and Banks, and returns with violence to the Place, where it was wont to have its Course. 'Tis the same with these old sinners, they have for so many years been accusom'd to live in a miserable liberty of saying and doing, whatever comes into their Fancy, and to let their Hearts go with so much license after all their Desires, that to exhort

hort them to change their Life, and perswade them to resist the motions of their Passions, is to give them so intolerable a Pain, that no time seems short enough for them, till they get out of this Constraint, and return to their first Disorders. We see by the Effect, that the true Cause, which makes them go with so much haste to Communion, is the secret Torment, they feel to see themselves reduc'd to a Necessity of being good for only two or three days, such deep roots has their Wickedness taken in their Hearts. Wretches that you are ! How can you enter into this false Presumption of being sav'd, and becoming Companions of those, who fight faithfully, if you are so lazy, that you will not a little strain yourselves, and wear the Armor of the Christian Warfare for the short space of three days ? But know, as the Apostle says, that none shall be crown'd, *except he strive lawfully*. And do not imagin, that what I now say to you, is contrary, to what I have represented to you concerning the Confidence, with which we ought to approach this Mystery. What I said in that place, was to give Courage to weak and timorous Souls, who thro' indiscreet Fears abstain from this Sacrament : and what I now say to you, is to retain the Rash within the bounds of their Duty ; not on any design to deprive them of this sovereign Remedy ; but to the end they may come to it with greater Purity and Preparation.

2 Tim. 2.
v. 5.

C H A P. VI.

What ought to be done before Communicating.

IF you desire then to do in this important Action, what you ought, take some time to dispose your self for it; and to say something more particular for those, who oftner frequent this divine Sacrament, my Opinion is, that, as *Moses* commanded the Children of *Israel* Exod. 19. v. 10, 11. to employ three days in preparing themselves to receive **GOD's** Law; so you should take the same time to put your self in a state to receive this great Majesty, which comes to give you not a Law of Death, but a Law of Life; a Law, which not only represents to you his Characters, but fills you with his Spirit; a Law of Love, and not of Fear. The Scripture gives us an Example, which ought to fill us with great Confusion. It says, that the Wives of King *Ashuerus* employ'd Esther 2. v. 12. a whole year in adorning and preparing themselves, to appear only once in the presence of that Prince. If these Women spent so much time, to render themselves agreeable to the Eyes of a mortal Man; what ought not you to do for obtaining the Favor of the King of Heaven? One of the greatest Praises, which the Angel gave the blessed Virgin, was, to tell her, that she had found Luk. 1. 30. favor in the sight of **GOD**. Wherefore then should not we take as much care to render our selves pleasing to **GOD**, as those Women did for that Vanity? Ought not our whole Life to

be a continual Preparation to render us worthy of the most signal of all Favors by communicating worthily.

I know well, that, morally speaking, you will not attain to this Perfection: but do at least something to dispose your self for so great and so redoubtable a Mystery. Do on your part seriously all, that may depend on you: and if you ask me, what that is, I will tell you first, that you ought to have your Eyes more watchful over your self; that you ought more attentively to consider all your Actions, and all your Words, and that you ought to take very great care not to slip into any thing, that may offend GOD's Goodness, not only mortally, but even venially, if it be possible. I tell you moreover, that you ought not only to avoid sin, but also the occasions of sin. Abstain from unprofitable Conversations, from diverting Entertainments, from Railleries, and all things of that nature, which are scarce ever without sin. Take heed then to bridle your Tongue; let your mouth be pure and innocent, and let no vain or dangerous word proceed from it, since 'tis the Door, by which this heavenly Host must enter into your Soul.

If I demand of you so much Circumspection and Cleanness in your Mouth, your Heart requires yet more; free it then from all dishonest Thoughts, from all Unquietness and Vanity; this is the Bed, on which your GOD is to repose, let him see nothing in it, that may offend his Eyes. And because the place of the Lord, as the Psalmist says, is a place of Peace, 'tis very fit to set aside, during that time, all Affairs, which may distract your mind, or put it in disorder, The Bed of the heavenly Bridegroom, as 'tis des-
scrib'd

scrib'd by the Spouse in her Canticle, is all cover'd with Flowers; mix not with them Thorns, that is, sour and discontented Thoughts. And if Necessity obliges to treat at that time of any difficult business, let it be with so much moderation and reservedness, that your Heart be not troubled about it, and that it hinder not the peace and repose of your Soul. In these days you ought to bestow more time on all spiritual Exercises: pray, meditate, this is the sweet-smelling Incense, with which you ought to perfume the House, wherein you purpose to receive this heavenly Guest: employ your self especially, during these three days, to pass over with attention in your minds the three sorts of Considerations, I have declar'd to you, to stir up in your Souls the Fear, Love, and Hunger, you ought to have for the Bread of Heaven. During these three days pray to the most Holy Trinity, address your self every day to one of the three Persons separately, to the end they may give you the Grace and Purity, which is necessary for this holy Communion. Have recourse particularly to the most holy Virgin, beseeching her by that fervor, and that admirable Devotion, with which she conceiv'd in her Womb the Son of GOD, and receiv'd him in her Arms, after he was born, to obtain for you the Grace to receive him worthily into your Souls. Beg of her by that Tenderness, and those Transports, with which she her self communicated, and receiv'd the sacred Body of her Son, after his Ascent into Heaven to obtain for you some part in the Grace and Love, which he made her feel, when he gave himself to her. In this Prayer to the Queen of Heaven, make particular Reflexions on the lively Faith, the

Devotion, the Tears, and the Joy, with which she receiv'd her Son under the Sacramental Species in expectation of the Time, when she should see him in all his Beauty. For if you can consider any thing of the Faith and Love of this holy Creature, that is, with how much Firmness and Certainty she believ'd, that in this consecrated Bread there was truly her Son's pretious Body; what Affection she had for him, and what Desire to see him, possess him, and embrace him in her heart: You will without doubt comprehend something of the Sentiments of that Divine Soul, and of the heavenly Content, she found in her self at the time of the Communion. Beg of her some of her Devotion, and that she will transmit to you some Sparkle of her Fire: the least of which would be sufficient to prepare you, as you ought, for this wonderful Feast.

The Evening before you communicate, 'twill do well to abstain, if you can, from Supper, or at least to sup very sparingly, without entring into any Discourse at Table, to the end your Sleep may be more pure and quiet, and your Mind more free; and that you may spend some part of the Night in considering the Greatness, of what you are going about, and the Happiness, you shall have the next day. Entring into your Bed, bring thither the same Thoughts, beg of GOD to preserve you, during the Darknels, from the Illussions and Artifices of your Enemy, to the end you may approach his Majesty with a greater purity of Body and Soul: as often as you wake, reassume the same Thoughts, and continue the same Prayers, you made at your going to Bed. And in the morning, as soon as your Eyes are open, let your Heart be fastned to the Cross of
JESUS

JESUS CHRIST, and fill'd with the memory of his Passion. 'Tis of this divine Sacrifice, that you ought particularly to meditate all this day, considering the immensity of the Love, with which the Son of GOD for your sake deliver'd himself up to this Treaty, how he presented his shoulders to receive the blows, which your Crimes merited, and in fine with what Charity he gives himself to us all at this Table for the common Remedy of all our Evils. 'Twas in remembrance of his Death, that JESUS CHRIST Luk. 22. v. 19. instituted this Sacrament, and this is the principal and tendrest of the Thoughts, which ought to fill your mind, if you desire to satisfy with Fidelity, as you are oblig'd to do, the Will of this Testator.

CHAP. VII.

What is to be done in communicating, and after Communion.

HAVING declar'd to you the Dispositions, which are necessary for you before Communion, I am now going to teach you in few words, what you ought to do at the time of your receiving, and after you shall have receiv'd. At your approach then to the Altar in order to communicate, imagin, that you hear that sweet voice of the Gospel: *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go forth to meet him.* Matt. 25. v. 6. For in effect, there is no Sacrament, in which our Lord so openly declares himself to be the Bridegroom of

Luk. 22.
v. 15.

Luk. 2. v. 28.
&c.

Luk. 1. v. 43.

our Souls, as in the Sacrament of the Eucharist; its proper Effect is to unite to him the Soul of the Communicant, and to make of two but one thing; which is indeed a spiritual Alliance. That you may then go forth to meet this Bridegroom, and receive him, as he deserves, you need only attentively consider, in what state he presents himself. He comes to you, full of Charity, Goodness, Sweetness, and Mercy. He tells you, that *he earnestly desires to celebrate this Pasch with you*, in which the true Lamb is eaten: and you ought on your side to receive him with all the Devotion, Love, Respect, and Joy, you are capable of, since you are going to be honor'd with the presence of your Souls true Bridegroom, of your Master, your Creator, your GOD, and your whole Good. Remember the Devotion and Joy, with which holy old *Simeon* receiv'd in his Arms the Child JESUS, when he was put into them by the Virgin: he protested, that he had only desir'd Life, to see his Saviour. Enter into the Sentiments of this Saint, and let not Life be dear to you, but because you are going to possess JESUS. See, with what Transport the Mother of St. *John Baptist* receiv'd into her House the Mother of her Lord, consider, with what satisfaction she said to her these words: *Whence is this to me, that the Mother of our Lord is come to me?* Is it not reasonable, since you receive this Lord in person, that you should testify your Joy, and say with this holy woman: Whence is this excess of Happiness befallen me, that the Lord of Angels, and all the Glory of Heaven vouchsafes to come to me? O my Father! O my Pastor, my Lord, my GOD, and my All: you are not contented with having created me after your Image, and redeem'd

Chap. 7. *a Christian Life.*

215

redeem'd me with your Blood ; but you will also by an incomparable Prodigy of Love come into me, make your abode in me, transform me into you, and make your self one and the same thing with me, as if you depended on me, and not I on you. Whence, o my Lord, does this Good come unto me ? Is it from my Merits, or that you would gain some Advantage from being with me ? No surely, 'tis an Effect of your sole Goodness, and Mercy, which makes you more delight to be with me, than I to be with you : I desire you, only because I am miserable, and have need of your Assistance, and you desire me thro pure Mercy ; I seek you, to possess him that can give me All, and you come to find me out, that you may give me All ; and because the Desire, you have to do me good, infinitely exceeds the inclination, I have to receive it (since your Goodness infinitely surpasses my Necessity) I certainly know, that the Pleasure, you have in coming to me, is much beyond that, I feel in receiving you : for 'tis your sacred Mouth, which teaches me, that *your greatest Delights are to be with the Sons of* Prov. 8. v. *Men* : nor is it more natural for Birds to fly, and ^{31.} for Fishes to swim, than 'tis for you, my Sovereign Good, to do Good, and communicate your self.

'Tis in these, or such like Thoughts your Heart ought to be employ'd before the receiving of this heavenly Guest, and also after you have receiv'd him, so to maintain and nourish in you the Devotion he requires. But because the Holiness and Dignity of this Bridegroom are beyond all, that can be imagin'd, and that he is moreover very glad to observe a chaste shamesfacticness in his Brides, your Devotion and Joy must be mixt with a ve-

ry great Respect, and a profound Humility, considering on the one side the supreme Majesty of him, who gives himself, and on the other the Unworthiness of him, that receives. Thus shall you accomplish, what *David* counsels you: *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice before him with trembling.* Now for the procuring these holy Affections, you will do well to call to mind the wonderful Threats, which GOD commanded to be pronounc'd to his People, when he intended to give them his Law. He caus'd them to be told, that neither Man, nor Beast, should dare to approach the Mountain, where his Majesty spake, under the Penalty of being immediatly ston'd to Death. He permitted *Aaron*, his High Priest, whom himself had chosen, and some of the most considerable, to come up into the Mountain; but at the same time he enjoin'd them to adore afar off, and not come near him, reserving that Priviledge to *Moses* alone. Apply to your self this Example, retire your self into your own Nothingness, abase your self even to the Dust and Bottom of the Earth, when you receive into your Body and Soul a Lord of so high a Majesty.

Psal. 124. v. 12.

Exod. 19.

v. 12, 13. &c.

§. 2.

Having receiv'd the Sacred Host, keep it a little while in your Mouth, that it may moisten, and so more easily pass down; for want of using this Precaution, it often happens, that, the Host sticking to the Roof of the Mouth, the Care and Hast, with which the Receiver endeavors to loosen it, disturb all the Devotion, that this precious Moment requires. Forbear spitting presently, after you have communicated, if you can avoid it; and

and if Necessity forces you to spit, let it be in some clean and decent Place, where it may not be trode on by any. Eat not, as soon as you come from Communion, because you cannot without some sort of Irreverence burden your Stomach with Meat, whilst the Sacramental Species remain yet entire in it. The time, which immediately follows this divine Action, you have now been finishing, is the fittest of all to treat with GOD, to tast, how sweet he is, and to embrace him in the midst of your Heart. Continue some time in the Church, in the place, where you have communicated, giving GOD thanks for this extraordinary Benefit, persist a while in meditating on all these Circumstances, and say with your mouth some of the Prayers, which I shall for this purpose put at the end of this third Book. Keep your self compos'd, and especially avoid a Fault, into which many persons fall, who make no scruple of prating and laughing with others, immediately after they have communicated. This I esteem a very great Offence, and highly deserving to be condemn'd: for can you treat with greater incivility a Guest, who should come to visit you, than to turn your back on him, as soon as he is come into your House, and leave his company, to divert your self about other matters. 'Tis the Opinion of Cardinal Cajetan, that the holy Sacrament communicates its Vertue to the Souls of the Receivers, not only at the time of their actual receiving, but also in that, which follows, and as long as the Species continue whole in the stomach; and he believes, that on this occasion may be said, what our Lord said on another: *Whilst I am* Joh. 9. v. 5. *in the world, I am the Light of the World.* If this
be

be so, as this learned Doctor supposes, 'tis a very great reason to invite you to continue, during that time, very closely recollected, and in a particular Devotion, to the end this heavenly Grace may be communicated to you in greater abundance, since this Sacrament operates conformably to the Disposition, it finds in Souls. The two principal Passages, by which the Holy Ghost most frequently conveys into us his Influences, are the Understanding and the Will, giving to the one great Lights, and to the other more tender sentiments for the things of G O D. You would act then with very little reason, if by such voluntary Distractions you should keep these Doors shut, during so advantageous a time. 'Tis at this time, you may receive one of the chiefeft Fruits of your Communion, and enjoy the most delicious Morfel of this Table : and since the Principal is done, and you have this divine Food in a manner still upon your lips, do not depart, when you ought most familiarly to open the Bosom of your Soul to G O D, and receive the most beneficial Effects of the Sacrament and the Preparation you have brought to it.

You desire perhaps, I should declare to you something more particular, and tell you, in what you may best employ these happy moments. In a word, Brethren, employ them in praising G O D, and in the Exercise of his Love : For here, as *St. Bernard* says, begin the Embraces and Kisses of Peace, the sweetness of which nothing can equal ; here is made that Union of the Soul with the heavenly Bridegroom, and this is truly the time and place to raise your Soul higher to G O D by holy Aspirations, which are nothing else, but frequent Acts of his Love, and burning Desires

Desires of the chiefest Good, such as were those of the Prophet, when he said: *I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.* Ps. 17. v. 1. And in another place: *As the Hart thirsteth after the Fountains of Waters, even so my Soul thirsteth after thee, O G O D.* Ps. 42. v. 1. I advise you also to take this time to give thanks to G O D for his Benefits, and especially for this, in which the Giver of all Goodness gives even himself. And that you may the better understand, how much you are oblig'd to make this last Acknowledgment, remember the Command, which G O D gave *Moses*, after he had rain'd down *Manna* on the People of *Israel*. Exod. 16. v. 32. &c. He bid him take a Vessel of Gold, and fill it with *Manna*, to be kept in the Ark for an eternal Memorial of that Benefit, and to the end all the Successors of that People might know, in what manner he had fed their Ancestors for forty years in the Desert. There is no Comparison between this *Manna*, which was a corruptible Food, and the most holy Sacrament, which is the Bread of eternal Life; and if G O D requir'd such an Acknowledgment for that perishable Meat, what do you not ow him, and what may not he exact of you for this, which is Life, and the source of a Life, that shall never have End? This Gift is so great, that there are no Words sufficient to express it. During the whole Day, in which you shall have obtain'd this Happiness, keep your self very reserv'd, and take heed not to do any thing, which may offend the Presence of a G O D, whose Goodness has made him condescend to lodge with you. The Kingly Prophet protested, that he would lie prostrate with Respect in the Place, where the Lord had set his Feet. Ps. 131. v. 7. And you ought on this day to have an holy Respect for your own Body, in

in which G O D himself repofes. This Refpect confifts partly in regulating your Exterior, but much more in not permitting any thing to enter into your Interior, which is not of G O D. You fhould efpecially take care to keep, during that day, a Religious f Silence: You muft, if I may be permitted to ufe fuch a Comparifon, flop the Oven's Mouth, for fear the Heat of Devotion, which the Fire of G O D's Love has kindled, fhould evaporate. The Spirit of Devotion is delicate, it eafily flips away, if it be not entertain'd, and returns not but with much difficulty. Thus the holy Sacrament will keep you in Modefty and Recollection, during the Dayes, which precede Communion, and thofe, that follow it: and as the Sun enlightens and embellifhes the World, not only when he is got above our Horizon, but alfo an hour before he rifes, and an hour after he is fet: fo the Sun of Juftice, who is contain'd in this admirable Sacrament, will enlighten your Souls not only at the time, you receive him, but alfo both before and after your receiving him: before, by the Hopes of receiving fo wonderful a Favor; after, by the Remembrance of having been fo highly honor'd.

You will find in the fifth Book of this Memorial feveral Prayers and Meditations, which will render all thefe Exercifes much more eafie to you, provided you read them with Attention and Recollection, ftaying and meditating on the things, which fhall moft move you, and wherein you fhall find the greateft Guft.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

*Of the Use of the Sacraments, and the Profit,
receiv'd by often frequenting them.*

HAVING copiously enough declar'd, in what manner you ought to prepare your self, that you may worthily receive the holy Communion, I am now going more briefly to inform you of the Profit, you may gain by the frequent use of the Sacraments, if you take care to approach them, as you ought.

In the first place, you must know, that the Sacraments of the Law of Grace are, as it were, the Conduit-pipes, and Channels of Heaven, by which the Holy Ghost conveys his Graces, and which originally have their sources from the side of JESUS CHRIST, according to that curious Conception of St. Chrysostom, that all those, who communicate, ought to make account, they are putting their mouths to the Wound of that precious side, and drinking there the Water of Life. They are Remedies and medicines for our Weaknesses, which none knows better than he, who was sent to cure them, and who wanted neither knowledge, nor love, to invent, what was most convenient for them. 'Twas not reasonable, there should be so many sorts of Medicines to cure our Bodies, and that there should be none for our Souls, which are subject to no less Distempers; since 'tis of far greater importance to provide for their Diseases, than for those of the Body, they

they being of a far greater and more excellent value. For this end were the Sacraments of the Law of Grace instituted: 'twas fit, that being a perfect Law, and requiring perfect Subjects, it should comprehend all, that is necessary for our salvation; and for this reason, as our Maladies are different and numerous, it has several Sacraments to remedy them.

Nor do the Sacraments alone on their part help us to obtain so good an Effect; but what we also contribute on ours for the worthy receiving them. You go to Confession, you accuse your self of your past sins, you testify the sorrow, you feel for having committed them, you humble your self at the feet of JESUS CHRIST's Vicar, you beg pardon for your Offences, you take a firm Resolution to amend, and in fine GOD receives you, and you are reconciled to him by the Ministry of the Church. You cannot sufficiently esteem the benefit of this divine Remedy: Nothing is so capable to help you to regulate your Life; and the being to give an account of your Conscience from time to time, will make you without doubt become careful to keep it in a good condition. A Traveller, that walks between two Walls, is oblig'd to go the direct way, since he can neither turn aside on one hand, or other: so the Confession, you have made, and that, which must soon follow, are a great means to keep you from declining to any thing, that is ill. How beneficial is this Sacrament? how great is its Necessity in the Church, and how desirable it is, that *Christians* had at least as much esteem for spiritual things, as they have for temporal, to the end they might comprehend its worth! Must not a Garden be continually dress'd?
must

must not an House be daily swept? must not the Linen, you use, be often wash'd? because all these things grow foul, if they are not frequently cleans'd? You can less continue in so corrupt a World, as this we live in, without having your Soul stain'd and defil'd: and you would at the same time renounce both Piety and Reason, if you would not have recourse to so easie a Remedy, and make often use of it, since you are so often in danger. Wash your Soul in the wholesome Water of Penance and Confession once a Week, since you wash at least, so often the Linnen, which covers your Flesh; for the Purity of your Soul is as much to be prefer'd before the Cleanliness of your Body, as the one is more estimable and more precious than the other.

See, with how much hast and care the Mariners lay their hand to the Pump of their Ship, to empty out the water, it continually gathers in, especially in time of Rain, for fear least being over-burden'd, it should sink down to the bottom: the Venial sins, we daily commit, appear nothing to us, and yet they are like drops of water, which fall into the bottom of our Soul, and bring us by little and little to Mortal sins, which utterly sink us, and cause our Death. Let us go then to the Remedy, which may preserve us from the lesser, that so we may avoid falling into the greater, which would bring us to an irrecoverable loss. We see also, how Nature of her self provides for the ease of Bodies fill'd with ill Humors, opening some Issue, by which they are purg'd; and that by this means those, who otherwise could scarce live, are a long time preserv'd in a state of health, and that Physicians are very careful not to stop these natural Issues, because they will not deprive their

their Patients of so certain a Remedy. What Nature wisely finds out for the preservation of Bodies, Grace more efficaciously does for the saving of Souls: There are daily bred in us ill Humors by sin, and they are daily purg'd and wash'd away by a good Confession.

Of the Effects of Sacramental Communion.

THUS are Souls purify'd, and thus do they receive Health in Confession: but since this Health is expos'd to many dangers, GOD has of his Goodness given them a powerful Remedy for its preservation, that is, the most holy Sacrament of the Altar, which JESUS CHRIST has instituted in the form of Food: because as Food maintains the life of the Body, so this Sacrament sustains the life of the Spirit: this Life is Charity, which this divine Preservative supports amidst all the Contradictions it meets with here below. Wherefore JESUS CHRIST said, that *his Flesh was truly Meat, and his Blood truly Drink*: and all the Fathers on these words unanimously teach us, that this divine Meat works spiritually in Souls all the Effects, which the ordinary Nourishment does in Bodies: for it strengthens us in the spiritual life, it causes in our Souls an inward Gust, which fills them with Joy, it restores supernatural Forces, it repairs the Vertues, which are weakned, it enables to resist Temptations, and makes men grow up to the highest Perfection, they ought to ascend to, if themselves put no Impediment to it.

If

S. Thom.
3 part. 2. q. 79.

Joh. 6. v. 55.

If you ask, how it is possible, that a corporal substance should produce such a spiritual effect, as the preserving and augmenting of Charity, and the maintaining in us the life of the Soul, I will tell you, that this Wonder comes from the supernatural Vertue of the Sacraments, which GOD has ordain'd: He would have them serve for a Remedy to our Weakness, and that under visible forms they should operate invisible effects: Thus in the Sacrament of Baptism the Water, which outwardly washes the Body, inwardly cleanses the Soul from all its filth, and puts it in a state of Grace. This divine Sacrament does the same in its manner, as being a Sacrament, and the greatest of all Sacraments: But besides this it has two signal Advantages above all the rest, which cause it more powerfully to produce this Effect. The first is, that with the Flesh it truly contains in it the Soul of JESUS CHRIST, and the eternal Word of the living GOD, and the Life of all things; who by the means of the Sacrament enters into the Soul of the Believer, which communicates, and produces in it the admirable effect of giving him a spiritual Life. The Physician, designing to cure his Patient with some Powders, puts them into water, to the end the water, which is liquid, may carry the Remedy thro' all the parts of the Body, in which it is to make its Operation. In like manner acts the Physician of our Souls, he would unite the Divine Word with the Flesh of Man, that entering by this admirable way into men, compos'd of Flesh, it might work in them this kind of Health and Life.

The second is, that 'tis not only the Divine Word, which operates this Effect by it self, but the Flesh, which he has united to himself, participates

8. Thom.
3. p. 4. q. 37.
art. 1.

Q

cipates

Luk. 8. v. 55.

icipates of the same Vertue, and this Flesh, as the Instrument of the Word, and by the Union, it has with him, causes also Life, and a true Spring of Life. Wherefore our Lord, as soon as he had rais'd the Prince of the Synagogues Daughter, commanded, they should give her to eat, to the end the Life, he had restor'd her by his Power, might be preserv'd by Nourishment, and to teach us, that Souls, rais'd by the Vertue of Almighty GOD, which is found in the Sacrament of Penance, stand in need of this heavenly Food, to preserve in them by this last Sacrament the Life, they have receiv'd by the first. Thus you see, how necessary these two Sacraments are for the spiritual Life, since the one gives it, and the other maintains it. If you desire then to obtain this happy Life, confels often; and if you desire to preserve it, communicate often. Nor think to find any other reason, why you see at this day so many people dy spiritually, but because they will not follow the Counsel, I here give you. 'Tis for the same reason, that in the greatest part of men there is not seen any spark of Charity, in which the Life of the Soul consists, because scarce any one makes use of the sacred Preservatives, which GOD has ordain'd for this effect. Charity, as Cardinal *Cajetan* admirably well says, is in this World, as out of her natural place; she is a Citizen of Heaven, where having the sovereign Good present, she incessantly burns with love of him. But on Earth she is like a stranger, she finds there a thousand things, which are contrary to her, and she has need of a strong Defensive, to subsist there. One drop of water, cast into the Sea, endures for ever, because it is in its Element, and of the same nature with the other water, it is

is mixt with; but if you pour it on the Earth, 'tis immediately dry'd up, because of the natural dryness of the place, where it was spilt, which is contrary to it. A Town, situated in the heart of a Kingdom, is secure from Enemies, it needs neither Fortifications nor Garrisons to preserve it; but a Frontier-Town is in danger of being lost, if it be not defended by Ramparts and Souldiers. So Charity in this Life runs great hazards, she is here out of her natural place, her Enemies are numerous and mighty, and she would never subsist, if her Sovereign had not fortify'd her with powerful Defences, of which the strongest is undoubtedly the holy Sacrament. *David* perceiv'd something of it, when he said: *Tbou hast prepar'd* Psal. 22. v. 5.
a Table in my sight, O Lord, (which gives me ver-
tue and strength) against them, that persecute me.
 And if we are all expos'd to the Assaults, which these Enemies daily make upon us, how can we resist them without the succor of this Table, which **G O D** has prepar'd, and which is all our strength. Wo be to them, said *St. Bernard*, that are call'd to do the Works of the Mighty, and do not eat the Bread of the Mighty. Who are they, Brethren, that are call'd to do the Actions of the strong and hardy, but such, as in the day of their Baptism declar'd themselves the Souldiers of **JESUS CHRIST**, and Enemies to the Devil, and all his Poms? And what is the Food, that gives strength against these terrible Enemies, but this divine Sacrament, which, according to *St. Chrysostom*, changes those, who come to it, and makes them Lions, who cast Fire out of their Mouth? Wherefore instead of what we read, *Man has eaten the Bread of Angels*, *St. Hierom* has translated, Psal. 77. v. 25.
Man has eaten the Bread of the Mighty: for such

in effect is the holy Sacrament, which was figur'd by that Bread.

And therefore with great reason does this holy Father bewail the unhappiness of those, who, seeing themselves daily call'd to the Battel, and having no Arms for their defence, which are equal to those of the Eucharist, will not make use of them, knowing, that the loss of so many souls, as we daily see to perish, happens only thro' this Negligence. In the time of the Primitive Church, when the Sacrament was continually administred to the Faithful, the *Christians*, strengthen'd with its vertue, surmounted without difficulty the Rage of their Persecutors. They daily laid down their lives for the sake of Justice, for which we will not take the least pains. Change then in fine your Conduct, you have need of a Remedy amongst so many Dangers and Deaths, to which you are perpetually expos'd, draw near to this Table, feed your selves with this Bread of the Mighty, and resolve to renounce the Errors of this Age, to imitate the Piety of those, who liv'd in the first Ages of the Church, if you desire to fight well, and be crown'd with them.

§. 2.

Answers to the Objections of the Slothful.

CARNAL men, and such, as have no other Rule of their Conduct, but their Senses and corrupt Will, ask, why so many Confessions and Communions, and whether it be not sufficient to confess once a year, as the Church ordains? Those, that speak thus, neither understand the
Cor-

Corruption of Nature, nor the Vertue of this heavenly Medicine, nor the Necessity, we have of it.

If Man were sick but once a year, 'twould be sufficient for him only once a year to make use of these Remedies; but if Mans whole Life is nothing, but a continual train of Infirmities, if the heat of our Concupiscence so often scorches us, if Pride, Envy, Impurity, the fester'd Wound of our ancient Enmities, the Loathing of spiritual things, and an unsatiable Hunger after earthly things, make in us every moment such strange Ravages, shall we be so indiscreet, as to delay the providing against them till the Year's expir'd, and do we think by such slow Remedies to cure the Evils, we daily feel? Plaisters have little force, when they are apply'd to old Sores. Confession, I grant, cures sins; but it takes not away the roots of them: the ill Habits, in which we are grown old, continue, and the Cure of them is exceeding difficult.

What would you say of a man, who should see his House set on fire, or his Walls pulling down by his Enemies, and expect till the end of the year, to oppose it? would you not accuse him of Cowardise or Folly? yet this is the Case of most men. Our Flesh daily burns with as many Flames, as it feels irregular Desires, the Devils, which are our greatest Enemies, make continual attacks upon our Heart, to whom we can oppose nothing of so great power, as the Sacraments; the Danger is extreame and present, and will you stay a year, before you remedy it? whoever acts thus, knows not the value of his Soul, understands not the perverseness of his Flesh, is ignorant of the vertue of the Sacraments, and the End, for

Q 3

which

which they were instituted: for 'tis not more certain, that Physick was invented to cure the Diseases of Bodies, and Bread to preserve them, than 'tis true, that the Sacrament of Penance was ordain'd to heal the Maladies of our Souls, and that of the Communion to nourish them. You will tell me, that at the end of this Year GOD will pardon all your sins; be it so, but do you not apprehend the tyranny of ill Custom, which, having taken deep root in your Souls, cannot be pluckt up without difficulty? Do you make nothing of so many offences, that you might have avoided, which are of greater importance than the loss of a thousand Worlds? Have you no fear of the other sins, which this first sin will draw after it, since St. Gregory says, that the sin, which is not remedy'd by Penance, is soon follow'd by some other, no less heavy than the former? Can it be doubted, but that 'twere better to prevent dangerous Wounds, than to seek cure for them, after they are made? and were it not more advantageous for a marry'd woman never to have committed Adultery, than after so great a Crime to have receiv'd her Husbands Pardon? The Church indeed obliges you not to communicate above once a year; but do you not know, that in this she acts like a tender Mother, who would not give the weak occasion either to communicate unworthily, or to break her Laws, as some do, who quite forsake the Communion? 'Tis an Indulgence, she uses in favor of the weak, leaving the door open, and this holy Table always prepar'd for those, who have more Devotion and Piety.

There are many, that understand well, what I say, and know by experience the vertue of the
 Sacra-

Sacraments; but they make a difficulty to receive them often for shame of the World, being like those *Pharisees*, of whom *St. John* speaks, that *Joh. 12. knew JESUS CHRIST, but durst not confess him, v. 42. because they feared the People,* and whom the holy Evangelist accuses, *that they loved the Glory of men v. 43. more than the Glory of GOD.* Are not you truly guilty of that Fault? for confessing, as you do, that this Sacrament was instituted by *JESUS CHRIST*, and that himself ordain'd the use of it, what is your not daring to come to it for fear of the World, but a being asham'd to declare your self a good *Christian*, and true Disciple of *JESUS CHRIST*? *St. Peter* bewail'd all his life one such Fault? He was afraid to appear one of *JESUS CHRIST*'s Disciples, and the shame of the World made him deny him. Bewail, as he did, your Infidelities with Tears of Bloud. *JESUS CHRIST* reigns now in Heaven, he is ador'd by all the World, and men are asham'd to appear his Disciples. In what manner, says *Salvian*, is *JESUS CHRIST* at this day honor'd amongst *Christians*, when the being his is an occasion to make one less esteem'd of men? Can the Corruption of the World come to any greater Extremity, than to hold Religion for a mean and dishonorable thing? On the contrary 'tis this only, that deserves Honor, and to which all Divine and Human Laws have given Respect and Deference. Say then no longer, that the Glamors of the World keep you back from this divine Mystery. You know, that amongst those three great Enemies of our souls, of which the Scripture makes mention, one of the most dangerous is the World. You know, that it oppos'd *JESUS CHRIST*, and that it persecuted the Apostles, Prophets, and

Mat. 11.
v. 28.

Gal. 1. v. 10.

Soliloq. c. 10.

all the Saints. Would you after this have any esteem for the most open of your Enemies? Who ever rely'd on the Counsel of his Adversary, and of an Adversary, that has sworn an irreconcilable War? The World withdraws you from the holy Mysteries; JESUS CHRIST invites you to 'em, when he says, *Come to me, all ye, that labor, and are burden'd, and I will refresh you*: To which of these two Voices ought you with greatest reason to give ear? If JESUS CHRIST calling us on the one side, and the World on the other, we run to the World, and leave JESUS CHRIST, how can we be nam'd the Servants of JESUS CHRIST? We are the Servants of him, whose Will we do, and whom we desire to please; and 'tis to us, that the Apostle said: *If I go about to please men, I am no longer the Servant of JESUS CHRIST*. Follow your Masters voice; You might perhaps alledge some excuse, if the World call'd you to Rest, and JESUS CHRIST to Labor; but 'tis quite contrary, as St. *Augustin* represents it: *The World, says he, cries to you more by Action, than by Voice, There is nothing so weak, as I am: JESUS CHRIST says to you, There is nothing so strong, as I am: and yet my miserable Soul abuses rather the World, impotent as it is, than JESUS CHRIST with all his strength.*

Tell me moreover, why do you trouble your self about the Talk of the World? Does it deprive you of any considerable Good, or do you any very important Injury? In no wise: you are like fearful Beasts, terrify'd at a shadow, or something in the Air: All these Fears are only the effect of your self-love, which is so jealous of your Advantages, and so fearful to let you do any thing without security, that it apprehends not only

only real, but even imaginary Dangers. But tho' there should indeed be cause to fear, and tho' the Persecution of men should proceed even to the shedding of your Blood, could you refuse to expose your self to a little pains for the enjoyment of so great a Good? Could you think, you had paid too dear for so precious a thing? A Bear, being got to an Hive, cares not, tho' the Bees sting him on all sides, so he may but have his fill of Honey. You possess with the holy Host an heap of all good things; you tast in it the greatest of all sweetness, and will you not for the enjoyment of so rare a Consolation, support with cheerfulness the stings of some slanderous Tongue.

I know others as guilty as these, who thro' meer sloth, and because they will not take the time necessary to prepare themselves for Communion, deprive themselves of the holy Sacrament, and of JESUS CHRIST himself, the most excellent of all the Benefits, contain'd in it. Some *Christians* are so indifferent to the things of G O D, that they esteem not this Treasure, and a little care, or a little retiredness appears difficult to them, for obtaining the possession of it. Indeed, Brethren, you are very far from the sentiments of the Saints, and particularly of the holy Martyr St. *Ignatius*, who in one of his Letters has these excellent words: *Let Fires, Crosses, Wild Beasts, the Renting of all my Members, all the Torments of the World, and all those, the Devils can invent, fall upon me, provided I may be worthy to enjoy JESUS CHRIST.* This holy man desir'd to be expos'd to all the Martyrdoms, which the Cruelty of the Devils could make him suffer, that he might by this means go to JESUS CHRIST; and will you, knowing, that JESUS CHRIST comes

Prov. 19.
v. 24.

comes to you in this Sacrament, think much of taking a little pains to dispose your self by Prayer and Confession, for the Fruition of your GOD? Can any greater folly be imagin'd, than to let your self perish for Hunger, for fear of stretching forth your hand to a great Banquet, which is prepar'd for you? *The Saggard* says the Wise man, *bideth his hand in his Bosom, and bath not the heart to lift it to his Mouth.* In truth there can nothing be conceiv'd more abominable, and I see not, what excuse you can make at the day of Judgment for having on so small an occasion condemn'd the greatest of all Remedies, and the most precious of GOD's Gifts.

Neither alledge to me, that you abstain from it thro' Respect, and that if you long delay your approach to the Communion, 'tis, that you may come to it with greater Reverence. One of the many Effects, produc'd by this holy Sacrament, is, that the frequenting it augments our Esteem of it. Amongst men too frequent Conversation breeds Contempt; but in the Communion with JESUS CHRIST, when you receive him worthily, Grace is given you with him, who is the Fountain of all Grace, and the more you receive him, the more Grace you receive: and the more Grace increases, the more is Fear, Love, Devotion, Respect, and all the other Vertues, which proceed from Grace, and are the true Preparations, that this august Sacrament requires; increas'd in you. Those, who receive it seldom, deprive themselves of these Fruits, and undoubtedly receive it with less Devotion. *St. Gregory* affords us another proof of it by the difference he puts between the tast of spiritual and corporal Delights. *The one*, says this Saint, speaking of
sensual

sensual Delights, inflame us with desire, whilst un-
enjoy'd: but as soon as we are possess'd of them, they
sate, and disgust us; as appears in two Persons, of
which the one is hungry, and the other fill'd. But
the other, that is spiritual Delights, are of a very
different nature. They are not desir'd, before they are
possess'd, because they are not known, but when they are
once tasted, the possession of them augments the Desire:
one is never satisfy'd with them, and those, that feed
on them, find, what Wisdom says; They, that eat me, Eccl. 14.
shall still hunger, and they that drink me, shall still
thirst. Whence 'tis easie to conclude, that if the
desire and hunger after this heavenly Bread
make one of the principal Dispositions, we ought
to bring to the receiving it, and if it be true, that
the desire increases by the possession of this Bread,
which is the Delight of the Saints, 'tis also clear,
that the more you shall receive it, the more you
will desire it, and the more worthily you will
receive it; and on the contrary, if you long de-
lay your coming to it, since on the one side you
will want this great help; and on the other your
sins will be multiply'd for want of using it, this
delay will be the cause, that you will undoubt-
edly not make so good a Communion.

You will tell me again, that you find in your
self much weakness, that you are a sinner, and that
you hold your self unworthy this heavenly Food;
I answer you, that not finding your self bur-
den'd with mortal sins, you ought to come to it
for this very reason, which keeps you back. This
Sacrament obtains the Pardon of sins, it gives
strength to those, that are weak, 'tis the Physick
of the sick, and the Treasure of the Poor: where-
fore some Saints have said, that often by the ver-
tue of this Sacrament, of Atrite men become
Contrites,

Mat. 9. v. 13,
13.

a Kin. 6.
v. 6, &c.

Contrite, which is no less than to say, that of dead they became living. Remember, that **JESUS CHRIST** did eat with Publicans and Sinners, and that he answer'd the *Jews*, who were scandaliz'd at it: *The whole need not a Physician, but those, that are sick; and I am not come to call the Just, but Sinners.* 'Tis good to refrain from this Sacrament thro' Fear; and 'tis good to come to it thro' Love, because both the one and the other honors **GOD**: but as *St. Thomas* determines, 'tis better to draw near thro' Love, than to keep back thro' Fear, because generally speaking, Actions, which are done for Love, are better, and more excellent than those, that are done for Fear. Wherefore we read, that *David*, having seen, how **GOD** had slain *Osa* for the little respect, he bare to the Ark of the Testament, durst not bring it into his own house, but carry'd it aside into that of *Obededom*; but seeing, how **GOD** had heap'd upon *Obededom*, and his whole Family Happiness and Prosperity, then casting off all the Fear, which had terrify'd him, and being encourag'd by the marks, **GOD** had given him of his Goodness, he receiv'd the Ark into his Palace, and with it all sort of Benedictions.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Cause, why some Persons find Little Devotion, when they Celebrate or Communicate.

I Know, some Questions may be askt on this occasion; and because they appear not without ground, I have thought it convenient to answer them. The first is, whence it comes to pass, that some Persons, who often celebrate and communicate, enjoy not the sweetness, they might expect from the use of this heavenly Bread, and that there are others, who are so far from having any tast of them, that it does not appear, they are the least advanc'd in vertue, but continue still in one and the same state.

I answer, that this sometimes happens thro' the fault of these Persons, who prepare not themselves, as they ought, to communicate, or because their Life is not regular enough; thus 'tis not to be wondred, if they find not the satisfaction, which others receive, who are better dispos'd, whose life is more perfect, and their soul more pure, and consequently more susceptible of heavenly things. This sometimes also happens by GOD's particular order, those, who communicate, contributing nothing to it thro' any fault of theirs, because this state is for their Good. We often see the experience of it in the most just, who, tho' their Fervor in Prayer is no way abated, lose all the Consolations, they formerly found in't, yet are not therefore less just, or agreeable

to

to GOD, who thus tries their Constancy, and by this means exercises, and humbles them. Others fall into this sort of Desertion, because they observe not in their Devotion all the Prudence, it requires, as St. Bonaventure teaches us in these words: *It sometimes happens to spiritual persons, that, the more they labor to acquire the Devotion, which is term'd sensible, the less they find it, and the more eager they are to possess it, as on Holy-days, and especially when they will communicate, the farther they are from it. Many are exceedingly afflicted at it, and in this dejection, to which their Heart is reduc'd, they judge, that perhaps GOD will not have them approach him in this state, or else they believe, that he drives them from his Presence, as unworthy to participate of so great a Sacrament, and in these apprehensions they deprive themselves of the chiefest Remedy, which might cure them.* Of this I could easily alledge to you divers Reasons, some of which regard the defects, that happen on our part, and others the particular Conduct and Dispensation of GOD; but to confine our selves to the point, of which we are treating, the principal and most common is, that on these days, and those of Communion, Devotion is sought with too much vehemence. Our souls by efforts, which have perhaps somewhat of self-love, violate too much their liberty, we stifle the power of Nature, when we labor with too great force, to press, and, as I may say, squeeze forth the Juice of Devotion. If we find it not, as soon as we desire it, we are seiz'd on by sorrow; thus we remain with more hardness, and less disposition to receive it, our own forces are turn'd against us, and having spent our selves, we become more distracted and dry. *He, says the Wise man, that over-much wrings the*
Paps

Paps for Milk, will draw out Bloud. And we see by experience, that when an Orange, or any other Fruit, is too much squeez'd, the juice, that comes from it, is neither so pure, nor so sweet. This is, what befalls those, who will have Devotion, as it were by force. The Affections, it produces, are more tender, when the Heart is more at liberty : and this is the reason, why we often find our selves more toucht with Devotion at other times, than on great Festivals, because the troublesome care, we then take to have Devotion, suffocates the Spirit of it ; whereas at other times, the desires being more moderate, the Spirit acts with greater freedom and Purity, which are two Dispositions, that very much contribute to the more easie finding, what is sought.

As to the second Question, why some of those, that celebrate or communicate, often make not the least progress, not only in Devotion, but even in common Vertues, and that on the contrary they are always seen to continue in the same Coldness and Negligence : a wise Doctor answers, that, regularly speaking, this happens for two reasons ; the one, thro' the default of their evil Preparation, as we have already said touching the want of Devotion : They present not themselves to the divine Mysteries with that fervor of Charity, and that amorous Hunger, which such excellent things deserve ; they come to them either thro' Custom, or Necessity, and having receiv'd them, lose at the same time all remembrance of them ; they immediately open the door to all manner of other Objects, and put not the least restraint in their Tongue, or the desires of their Heart : So that going without Respect, and returning without Recollection,

'tis

'tis no wonder, they gain so little benefit by it. I mention'd to you in the beginning of this Book that true Maxim, that all things work according to the Dispositions, they find in the subjects: which is confirm'd by the Example of this great Sacrament, it acts in Souls according to the Disposition, it meets with in them. It acts much in such, as are well prepar'd, and operates less in those which are not so.

The other cause is, that many People frequent the holy Altars, who still keep in their souls certain Defects, and certain secret Passions, of which they make no account; and for want of correcting and mortifying them, they become almost irremediable. These secret Evils are a great Obstacle to the advancement of these souls, and I put in the first place the excess of Self-love, and Self-will, the over-curious care of the Body, and the satisfaction of the Senses, which make those, who are subject to them, seek in all things the means to divert themselves. They lay themselves out on Creatures, amongst which Devotion is dissipated, or wholly lost; they are like those Vessels of ill-bak'd Clay, which cannot hold the Liquor, put into them; but it runs out by little and little, till there is nothing left in them. This Misfortune particularly befalls those, who amuse themselves in vain Conversations, and Discourses of Raillery, or embarrass themselves with unnecessary visits or Affairs: for in fine all these things disorder the place, where this heavenly Bridegroom is to take his rest: The Love of GOD is a very delicate thing, it admits no Rivals, it will alone possess the whole Heart.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Whether it be good to Communicate very often.

After my exhorting you, as I have done in the foregoing Chapter, to frequent the Sacraments, and particularly that of the Eucharist; you have reason to ask me, that I would prescribe you some Rule, and tell you the time, to which you shall limit your Communion.

The Answer to this Question is on the one side very easie; and on the other very difficult: for if we only regard the Vertue, and Efficacy of this Sacrament; how JESUS CHRIST resides in it, who is the Author of all Graces, and that by this means he applies to us the Merits of his Passion, which is of an infinit value, we ought, if we could, to receive him an infinity of times, since we receive by him a proportionate number of Graces and Favors: but if on the other side we consider the high Preparation, this Sacrament requires, according to which it communicates its vertue, and that 'tis the Sacrament of the Living, and not of the Dead, since eating supposes Life; in this view 'tis clear, that 'tis not fit to communicate often, but according to the Disposition, that is found in the Communicants: on which there are yet many things, that are necessary to be examin'd.

First, the state or condition of every one is to be consider'd; for Persons, dedicated to GOD's

R

service,

service, as Priests, Monks, Nuns, and all other Religious Persons, being more free from the perplexity of the World, and the care of secular Business, have undoubtedly in respect of their state, greater disposition to approach this Sacrament. I say *In respect of their State*, because JESUS CHRIST often supplies it by his Wisdom, which he gives to whom he pleases, as he pleases, and in what state soever. *David, Abraham, Job*, and many ancient Kings and Patriarchs were rais'd to a great Perfection; tho' their state contributed little to the attaining it; but they were assisted by divine Grace, which is more powerful than all states, how perfect soever they may be.

Secondly, Care must be taken, that every one before all things discharge the duties of the state, to which he is call'd, and in such manner apply himself to spiritual Exercises, that they no way prejudice these first and stricter Obligations. A marry'd woman, that is oblig'd to serve her Husband, to breed up her Children, to look particularly after her Daughters, to take care of her domestick Affairs, ought in such manner to give herself to matters of Devotion, that she omit not those, which are of Obligation, since the one are of Free Will, and the other of Necessity, the one are of Counsel, the other of Commandment. One of the principal Foundations of good Life is never to leave the works of Justice for those of Grace. *Obedience is better than Sacrifice*, said an holy Prophet; and he calls Obedience, whatsoever is of Obligation; and Sacrifice, what is of Devotion and Free Will. Men thro' a perverse inclination have almost a natural Opposition to this Order, and take more pleasure to do their own Will, than anothers. Take heed of this, and

and observe, that what I have said of the Duties of Women towards their Husbands and Children, concerns also those of Children to their Parents, especially if they are poor, old, or weak. The services, you shall do them in their necessities, make a part of the first Commandment of the second Table; and after what we owe to GOD, 'tis the first Obligation, he lays upon us. The irrational Creatures thro' the sole Instinct of Nature invite you to it by their Example, and the Storks with wonderful care assist those, from whom they had their Being, in their later years. Use then the Sacraments in such sort, that you forget not Obligations, so just, and so important, as these: for otherwise your Devotion will not be acceptable to GOD.

In the third place, every one ought to examine himself, and thoroughly consider, what he undertook, when he took up this custom of communicating often; he must look, whether he finds himself in Dispositions, pure enough, and, as I may say, with all the Apparel of Vertues, which are necessary for the worthy persevering in this excellent Design. If it be so, they may continue without fear, and with much profit: for as Trees, that are wont to be water'd, grow dry, when they want this relief: so Souls, which are accustom'd to this heavenly Food, are exceedingly weakned, when they are depriv'd of this benefit, which is so great, and so proportion'd to their necessities; they are often seen to grow very slack in the spiritual life, and sometimes entirely to renounce, what they had happily begun. 'Tis a thing, generally confirm'd by experience, that weak Bodies, being once us'd to a Medicine, which does them good, find themselves very ill, when they leave it: 'Tis the

same with Souls of this quality, if thro' their own fault they discontinue the use of so wholsom a Remedy. Thus 'tis for them to know the advantages they draw from it, and then to watch carefully over their Lives, for to keep themselves in so pure a state, that they may continue the frequent use of it without scruple, since they run the hazard of losing their strength, and fainting by the way, if they forsake so powerful and so efficacious an Assistance.

'Tis also to be observ'd, that men may take more liberty to go forth of their House, whither they shall think convenient, to seek the Sacraments, and Priests, which may administer them to them, than is fit for women. The same thing is also more seemly for elderly, than for young women; and generally speaking, all the Saints have very much recommended to the younger women the keeping retir'd, and out of the sight of People. Even in the old Law Almighty G O D, expressly commanding the men to appear before him thrice a year in his Temple, never oblig'd the women to come thither so much as once in their whole life. The eternal Wisdom knew, how dangerous 'tis for this Sex to be gadding abroad. And *Dina, Jacob's Daughter*, shew'd but too sad an experience of it: for by only once going forth of her Fathers house she destroy'd her self, and a whole City with her. Wherefore not without cause does St. *Ambrose* praise the Blessed Virgin, that departing out of her house, where she had always kept her self retir'd, she went in great hast, when she was oblig'd to go and visit her Cousin St. *Elizabeth*. I say not this, to impose a perpetual Cloyster on Maidens, but to exhort them, to speak, as much as they can, to G O D

in

Deut. 16.
v. 16.

Gen. 34. per
totum.

Luk 1. v. 39.

in private, to seek him in the secretst corners of their Houses, and to go as little abroad, as is possible, unless it be on such days, as the Church commands, or when according to custom they are to receive the blessed Sacrament, doing it with this circumspection, I advise them to. I make not this however a general Rule: for such Persons are to be excepted from it, as, tho' young in years, are yet very old in vertue.

In fine every one ought to consult his Conscience, and consider, what benefit he receives by frequent Communion: for if a person by often receiving finds himself more devout, more recollect'd, more circumspect in his words, more diligent in good works, more vigilant over his actions, more Master over his wrath, and other irregular desires, tho' it be not in a very eminent degree, 'tis a proof, that this Sacrament is profitable to him, and therefore he ought to come the oftner to it, as he receives from it more advantageous effects. But if he sees nothing of all this in himself, 'tis an assur'd mark of the little profit, he gets by it, and of the slender preparation, he makes for it. 'Tis therefore fit for such a person, either to abate the number of his Communions, or to augment the Vertues, which are necessary for his communicating well. 'Tis notwithstanding true, that this divine Mystery sometimes works so secretly, that it can scarce be perceiv'd: for Grace, as well as Nature, acts ordinarily by little and little, as it happens in Plants, the growth whereof is imperceptible, and not to be discern'd, till they have attain'd their just height. Wherefore we ought not on this occasion to rely on our own Judgments, but remit our selves to a discrete and vertuous Confessor, who may determin all according to his prudence.

R 3

In

Serm. 2.
Purif. &
Ep. 324.

In the mean time 'tis of very great importance to observe, that we not only profit, when we go forward, but also when we go not backward. I know, *St. Bernard* says, that in the way of *G O D* not to go forward is to go backward; one may nevertheless more easily perceive, when he turns back, than when he goes forward; as the motion of a Stone is more clearly discern'd, which with violence rolls down an hill, than that of another, which is insensibly thrust upwards: For to increase is very hard, and to decrease very easie; and 'tis easier to pull down, than to build. Wherefore I say, that, if on one side we observe, we make but little progress by often frequenting the Communion, and on the other side also perceive, that by discontinuing it we turn backward, fall into notable defects, and find our selves more unable to resist Temptations, more cold in Prayer, more unwilling to Obedience, more slothful in Works of Mercy, more easily provok'd to unseemly Laughter, or to vain and idle Talk, more impatient in Troubles, and in fine more careless and negligent in watching over our selves and our Actions. If, I say, we perceive, that we fall into all these inconveniences, or into any of them, when we refrain from the holy Sacrament, and that, when we receive it, we are less subject to them, 'tis a sign, we profit by it, because to suffer less damage is in some sort to profit, and Medicines, which preserve from Distempers, are no less necessary than those, which increase Health. This Consideration ought very much to comfort those, who do not so clearly perceive in themselves the Fruits of the Communion; and tho these persons often commit venial sins, they ought not therefore to abstain from communicating, provided

provided they seriously repent them of their sins: For, as St. Hilary says, *we ought not to forsake the wholsom Medicine of our Lords Body, if we bring not to it mortal sins; on the contrary, this Reason rather obliges us to have recourse to it: since one of the effects of the holy Sacrament, and its particular Vertue, is to serve for a Preservative against these sorts of sins, without which this Life cannot be pass'd over.*

All these things being suppos'd, there is none, but may easily judge, whether he ought to present himself at this heavenly Table seldom, or often: for 'twill be sufficient for some to communicate on the principal Festivals of the year, for others once a month, or once in fifteen days, and for others once every week, as St. Augustin advises: *wherewith all sorts of persons, how vertuous soever, ought to content themselves, unless there happen any particular circumstances, or important causes, which may oblige them to do otherwise. For, as there is no Rule without exception, so nothing can be establisht as perpetual, that has not some limitation. This is St. Bonaventure's advice in a Treatise of Perfection, which he writ for one of his Sisters, where he has in substance the same things, we have here declar'd. His words are these. If any one desires to know, whether 'tis better to communicate seldom, or often, it seems impossible to me, to prescribe in this one general Rule for all: for the Merits of men, as also their Designs, and Exercises, being different, the Motions of the Holy Ghost divers, and there being so many several states of Life in the World, 'tis as difficult to make one general Rule, that may be sutable for them, all as one Garment, to fit every person. Wherefore, as one and the same Medicine is not administred to all Patients, nor yet in the same quantity, and, as to render it beneficial,*

Lib. de Eccl.
Doz. c. 58.

the quality of the Persons and Diseases, their Complexions, the time, and place must be consider'd: so the same thing is to be done, in what concerns this heavenly Medicine. Those, that are entangled with the Cares and Troubles of the World, can more rarely get rid of them, to receive, than they, who are free from all this incumbrance, and have dedicated their Lives to spiritual Exercises. And amongst these some are more vigilant over their Conduct, and live with greater Purity of Conscience, than others: Some burn with a desire to participate of this holy Mystery; others on the contrary approach it not without fear and trembling; and if their Conscience, the Order, establisht in their Religion, and the apprehension of being more separated from Almighty GOD by not communicating did not press them, they would be seen to come very seldom to the holy Table. But I am of opinion, that Priests, whose proper Office 'tis to celebrate, being excepted, there are few persons, for whom 'tis not sufficient to communicate once a week, if there be not some particular cause, or reason to do otherwise. As if some sickness should happen, or some principal Feast, or a pious Soul should find it self press'd by some new and extraordinary desire to receive him, who alone is capable to moderate and refresh the heat of an Heart, that burns with his Love: It may in this case be piously believ'd, that this Vehemency and Fervor proceed from the Holy Ghost, if other circumstances concur with it, and then it seems, that there is reason not to resist it. Experience confirms this Conduct, and there have been persons seen, whose Life JESUS CHRIST in such sort was, that, if they had not been often fed with this sacred Bread, it seem'd, their corporal life would have fail'd them, so weak and feeble was their Body. 'Tis therefore a good and wholsom thing to prepare ones self frequently for the receiving of this admirable Remedy with all the Devotion,

Devotion, that is due to it, and, after one has receiv'd it, to watch over ones self and all ones actions with a most exact diligence. From this none has right to be exempted, and Religious Persons, who are particularly dedicated to GOD, much less than others, if they will obtain and preserve the Innocence and Purity, which this holy Sacrament brings. Andtho a man sometimes feels but little Devotion, yet ought he not to forbear coming humbly to this Bread of life, putting his whole confidence in GOD's Mercy; and if he judges himself unworthy of it, he must also think, that, the more infirm and weak he feels himself, the more need he has of the Physician; since, as our Saviour himself has said, The whole have no need of the Physician, but the sick: *Mat. 9. v. 12.* For indeed we go not to JESUS CHRIST to sanctify him by our Holiness, but that he may sanctify us by his. Nor let any one be discourag'd, when after having done all, he could, he finds not himself toucht with that particular sweetness of Devotion, he might desire, or if in and after Communion he feels no sensible Tenderneß or Zeal, because 'tis often a particular Dispensation of Almighty GOD, who sometimes deprives his Children of this Consolation for Causes best known to himself. The Testimony of this Saint ought to be of very great Authority, this glorious Doctor having been so remarkable as well in Learning and Holiness, as in the Spirit of Devotion, which he had in an high degree, and which made him write on this subject nothing, but what he knew by experience.

You see then by the Testimony of this Father, and by whatsoever else, I have hitherto represented to you, the little reason, some men have, who thro a superfluous Zeal, and under pretence of Respect, condemn, and proceed even to preach against such persons, as frequent the Sacraments.

Thô

1. 2. q. 64. art.
2.

Tho there were some sort of Excess in this, yet there are so many other Evils in the World, greater and more dangerous, to be reprehended, that they ought not to spend all their strength and Learning, as they do, in attacking this alone; especially since, things being well consider'd, 'tis manifest, that the World suffers much more damage by over-much abstaining from the Sacraments, than by too often coming to them. And the better to understand this, you shall observe according to the Doctrine of *St. Thomas*, that, as all moral Vertues consist in a mean, so they have necessarily two Vices, which are opposit to them, the one by excess, and the other by defect; tho they have not always Names, by which they may be distinguisht: 'Tis the same in the use of the Sacraments, and generally in all spiritual Exercises, there may be either too much, or too little. This being true, if we will equitably consider the greater and more to be fear'd of these two Extremities, we shall find, that the World undoubtedly suffers far more inconveniences by too much forbearing, than by too much frequenting the Sacraments. For, supposing there were some fault on this side, yet who can chuse but know, that the Discommodity must be much greater, to see men almost wholly refrain from the Sacraments, in which GOD has plac'd the Remedies of our Wounds, and the Salvation of our Souls? And in effect, whence comes it, that this Age is so corrupt, and the Life of Men so profligate, but from their contempt of this Sacrament, and voluntary abandoning this Bread of Life? To be convinc'd of this, we need only cast our eyes on the difference, there is between the present time, in which we live, when those, that bear the name of *Christians*,

3. et
t-
at
d
s
-
y
I
stians, communicate but once a year, and the past time of the Primitive Church, when those, who were truly *Christians*, communicated every day: this great difference, Brethren, will amaze you, and clearly shew you, which of these two is the better. Let those then, who have a zeal for the Glory of GOD, and his Church, send forth Cries to Heaven, and weep for a Cause, so worthy of Tears, to see men so strangely separated from GOD, and all spiritual Exercises, since this separation is truly the source and original of all our Miseries.

For, as Magistrates take all imaginable care to procure, that nothing may be wanting to the People, who are subject to their Government, being certain, that abundance never discontents them, tho' they know, that excess in Diet, and all the other conveniences of Life, may as well be prejudicial to the Publick, as Necessity: so those, who bear Office in the Church, are oblig'd to use more diligence, that they may keep them who are under their Charge from falling into a scarcity of spiritual Food, and heavenly Medicines, than they are to retrench their Excess; since want is in this case incomparably more dangerous than abundance, and that so much the more, because none can judge of this last but by the interior, which every one knows not, and 'tis a great Rashness to pronounce Decrees on an Affair, the bottom whereof is not known.

I believe, that what we have said, is more than sufficient to convince you of these Truths; I shall only add here some Meditations and Prayers for your entertainment before and after the holy Communion.

A Meditation before holy Communion, to stir up in the Soul the Fear and Love of the most holy Sacrament.

WHO art thou, O my Lord, and what am I, that I should presume to approach thee? What is Man, that he should receive his G O D into him? What is Man of himself, but a Vessel of Corruption, a Child of the Devil, an Heir of Hell, an Enemy of G O D, a Creature, weak to do Good, and unhappily powerful to do Evil? What is Man, but an Animal, blind in his Designs, vain in his Actions, filthy in his Desires, inconsistent in his Purposes, vile and base in all things, and only great in the false Esteem, he has of himself? Shall so miserable a Creature dare to present himself before a G O D of so high a Majesty, to be united with him? The Stars, O Lord, are not clean in thy sight, the Pillars of Heaven tremble before thee, the highest Seraphins cover themselves with their Wings in the presence of thy Greatness, and look on themselves as nothing: How then shall so wretched a Creature, as I am, attempt to touch thee, and receive thee into himself? St. *John Baptist*, sanctify'd from his Mothers womb, dares not touch thy head, and protests, he is not worthy to unty thy shoes. The Prince of the Apostles cries out, and says: *Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man.* And shall I have the boldness to come near thee, being fill'd with sins? If in the time of thy ancient Law the Loaves, which were set on the Table of thy Temple, and were only the shadow of this Mystery, might not be eaten but by him, that was clean, and

Job 26. v. 11.

Mat. 3. v. 11.

Luk. 5. v. 8.

1 Kin. 21.
v. 4, 5.

and sanctify'd, how shall not I, who am so void of all Holiness, dread to eat the Bread of Angels? Thou, O G O D, commandedst, that the Paschal Lamb should be eaten with unleavened Bread, ^{Exod. 12. v. 8. &c.} and bitter Lettice, and that the Eaters of it should have their shooes on their feet, and their Reins girt, and shall I dare to eat the true Paschal Lamb, of which the other was but a Figure, without having any of this Preparation? Am I that unleavened Bread, clear and free from any Leaven of Malice? Have I in me the sentiments of that true Contrition, which was signify'd by the bitter Lettice? Where is the Chastity of my Reins, and the Cleanness of my Feet, which are good Desires? I fear, and have great Reason to fear at my approach to this holy Table, seeing my self void of all these Dispositions. From this Table was ^{Mat. 22. v. 11. &c.} that wretched man driven, who was found to be without his Wedding-Garment, that is, without Charity, and was commanded to be bound hand and foot, and cast into utter Darknes; nor can I but expect the same punishment, if I present my self to it in the same condition. Divine Eyes of my Master, to which all the secrets of our Souls ly open, what shall become of me, if I am found thus naked at your Banquet? 'Twas so criminal a thing for a Priest to have inconsideratly toucht the Ark of the Testament, which was ready to ^{1 Kin. 6. v. 6. &c.} fall, that he was immediatly punisht with sudden death, and ought not I to fear the same punishment, if I unworthily receive him, who was figur'd by that Ark? The *Bethsamites* did but too ^{1 Kin. 6. v. 19.} curiously behold the same Ark, when it pass'd thro' their Land, and the Scripture teaches us, that for the expiation of their Rashness G O D slew fifty thousand of that People. O most merciful

ciful and dreadful G O D, how far is thy Sacrament above that Ark, and how much greater is it to receive thee, than to behold thee ! What must I do to lodge within me a G O D, who is Greatness and Justice it self ?

But if I have so great reason to fear, considering only thy Majesty, what ought I not to apprehend, if I cast my Eyes on my sins ? Infinite Beauty, there was a time, and may thy Mercy grant, that it last not still, when thou wert the thing, of which my heart least thought, and when I had more esteem for the Dust of the Creatures, than for the Treasures of thy Grace, and the hope of thy Glory : My Desires gave Law to my Life, I blindly obey'd my Concupiscences, and I made as little account of thee, as if I had never known thee : I was that Fool, who said in his heart, there is no G O D, because I liv'd a long time in such a manner, as if I believ'd, that there is none. I never did any thing for love of thee, I never dreaded thy Justice, I never refrain'd from Evil for fear of thy Laws, I never gave thee the Thanks I ought, for thy Benefits : and knowing, that thou art every-where, I never abstain'd from sin in thy presence. I gratified my Eyes, whatsoever they desir'd, and never us'd the least enforcement to my Heart, to restrain it from any Pleasure. There is no sort of Wickedness, of which I have not been capable, my Life has been nothing, but a continual Opposition, and War against thee, and a renewing of all the Torments, thou hast suffered for me. For when I have sometimes communicated, and, as soon as my Communion was over, begun again to offend thee ; I treated thee with the same contempt, as did the Souldiers, who on the one side ador'd thee with bended

bended knees, and on the other struck thee on the head with a Reed. Shall I then, O my Saviour and my Judge, dare to receive thee into an Abode, so vile, and so full of Impurity? Shall I dare to place thy sacred Body in a Den of Dragons and Serpents? I know, that a Soul, in which sin dwells, is the Habitation of the Devil, and a Cave of wild Beasts. Wilt thou, O Virginal Purity, and Fountain of all Beauty, be contented to be lodg'd in so abominable a place? *What Communion hath Light with Darkness, and what Agreement hath CHRIST with Belial? Flower of the Fields, and Lilly of the Valleys,* wilt thou suffer thy self to be the Food of Beasts? Shall this divine Meat be given to Dogs, and this precious Pearl be cast before Swine? Lover of pure Souls, who feedest among the Lillies, till the Day break, and the shadows fade away, what Repose can I offer thee in my heart, where instead of Flowers grow only Thorns and Thistles? *Thy Bed is of the Cedar of Libanon, its Pillars are of Silver, its Tester of Gold, and its Covering of Purple.* I have none of these Ornaments, what Seat shall I prepare for thee, when thou shalt come into me? Thy sacred Body was wrapt in a clean Linen-Cloth, and put in a new Sepulchre, in which no man was ever laid before; and I see nothing clean or new in my Soul, where I may receive thee: My Mouth has been *an open Sepulchre,* whence issu'd only stench thro' the corruption of my Sins, my Heart is an undrainable Source of ill Diseases, and my Will the Seat and Throne of thy Enemy. Can I then receive thee in this condition, and with my polluted Lips give thee the Kiss of Peace? I am in Confusion, seeing my self in this manner, O my true Redeemer, and am asham'd, being such, as I am, to go into the Arms

1 Cor. 8.

v. 13, 14.

Cant. 2. v. 1.

Mat. 7. v. 6.

Cant. 4. v. 5, 6

Cant. 3. v. 9,

10.

Mat. 27.

v. 59.

Luk. 23.

v. 53.

Psal. 5. v. 9.

Arms of the heavenly Bridegroom, who vouchsafes to embrace me, and receive me anew.

The second Part of this Meditation.

Mat. II.

v. 28.

Mat. 9. v. 11.

12.

I Know, O GOD, my extream Unworthiness, and I know also thy great Mercy: 'tis this, gives me the boldness to approach thee, as I am: for the more unworthy I am, the more thou art glorify'd in not rejecting so poor and filthy a Creature. Thou, O Lord, driv'st not sinners away from thee; but on the contrary call'st and draw'st them to thee: 'twas thou, that saidst: *Come unto me, all ye, that labor, and are laden, and I will refresh you.* Thou saidst: *The whole need not the Physician, but the sick. I am not come to call the Just, but Sinners.* And of thee 'twas publickly laid, that thou receiv'dst, and didst eat with Sinners. Thou art still the same, thou then wast, and I believe, that thou still at this day call'st from the height of Heaven those, whom thou hadst then the goodness to call on Earth. Toucht therefore with the Mercy, with which I know that thou call'st us, I come unto thee, oppress'd with sins, to the end it may please thee to ease me. I come with all my Miseries and all my Temptations, that I may be refresh'd: I come as a sick man to the Physician, to be cur'd, and as a sinner to the Fountain of Justice, to be justify'd. I learn, that thou receiv'st sinners, that thou eatest with them, and that thy greatest delight is to converse with them. If this manner of Food is pleasing to thee, thou hast in me, who am so great a sinner, wherewith to satisfy thy Hunger. I doubt not, O Lord, but the Tears of that publick Sinner *Mary Magdalen* were more delightful to thee, than the

the ~~Passer~~ sumptuous Feast, since thou didst not despise her Sorrow, nor reject her, as a person, ~~deaf~~ with sin; but on the contrary acceptedst her Penance, pardon'dst her Offences, defendest her against her Accusers, and for a little water, which she shed, forgav'st her abundance of Crimes. See here, O Lord, an opportunity to acquire thee greater Glory, a Sinner, that brings to thy feet more Iniquities, and fewer Tears. Thou shew'dst on that occasion neither the first nor last of thy Mercies, thou hadst before done many such, and thou wilt yet do many, that will not be less remarkable. Let that, which I hope for, be one of this number. Pardon this wretch, who has more unworthily offended thee, and yet has not so much sorrow for his Offences: I have not Tears enough to wash thy Feet, but thou hast shed so much Blood, as is sufficient to wash away all the sins of the World. Enter not into Indignation against me, because being such an one, as thou seest me, I presume nevertheless to come near thee; Remember, that thou disdain'dst not that poor Woman, sick of a bloody Flux, when she cast her self at thy feet, to be cur'd of her Infirmitie by touching the Hem of thy Garment; but on the contrary comfortedst her, and gav'st her courage, saying to her: *Be comforted, Daughter, thy Faith hath made thee whole.* I am afflicted with a more dangerous and more incurable Disease than hers, what then can I do else, but address my self to thee, as to the most powerful of all Remedies for the recovery of my Health? Thou art no less merciful on earth for being glorious in Heaven: for didst thou there exercise another Office, or hadst thou chang'd thy Nature, we should need another Gospel, to teach us

Mat. 9. v. 22.

this Difference. Thy Word is unchangeable, and 'tis by that I know, how all sick persons ran to thee, that they might touch thee, because out of thee issu'd forth a Vertue, which cur'd them; The Leprous came to thee, thou stretchst forth thy hand, and they were cleans'd; the Blind, the Deaf, the Paralytick, those, that were possess'd with Devils, and in fine all, that were afflicted with the strangest Maladies, had recourse to thee, and thou never refus'dst them thy Assistance. In thee is Health, Life, and the Remedy of all Diseases, thou art as merciful to will our Health, as thou art powerful to give it. Thus, O Lord, to whom can we have Recourse in our Necessities, but to thee?

I acknowledge indeed, that this divine Sacrament is not only Food for the Strong, but also Physick for the Sick, that 'tis not only the Support of the Living, but the Resurrection also of the Dead; that it not only fills the Just with Love and Joy, but cleanses also and cures the Sinners. Let every one approach it, as he can, and let every one take there, what is fit for him, and what his Lord will give him: Let the Just come to be fed at this Table, and let the voice of their Confession and Praise be heard at this sacred Festival; as for me, who am a sinner and sick, I will present my self there to *receive the Cup of Health*. There is no way in the *Christian* life, by which I can walk out of this sacred Mystery, and I see not the least pretence to excuse me from desiring the participation of it. If I am sick, this will cure me; if I am in health, this will preserve me; if I live, this will strengthen me; if I am dead, this will raise me again to life; if I am heated with divine love, this will more inflame me;

Psalm 41. v. 4.

Psalm 114.
v. 13.

me; and if I am cold, this will heat me. I will not lose Courage, for that I am blind, because *our Lord enlightens the Blind*; nor will I think myself without Remedy, for that I am fallen, since *our Lord raises those, which are fallen to the ground*. I will not fly from his presence, as *Adam* did, when he knew his Nakedness, forasmuch as he has the power to cover mine. I will not hide me from him, because I see my self unclean, and all over defil'd with sins, since he is the inexhaustible Fountain of Mercy: and my Poverty shall not hinder me from coming to him, because he is the Master and Dispenser of all created things. I do not believe, I shall do him any injury in this; on the contrary, the more miserable I am, the more remarkable occasion do I think to give him of making his Mercy admir'd by exercising it on me. The Scales, which cover'd his Eyes, who was born blind, serv'd only to make G O D's Glory appear in him with greater lustre; and the lowness, to which I am reduc'd, will render more conspicuous the Goodness of him, who, being so great and so exalted, disdains not the meanest and most contemptible things: especially since my Merits obtain not so great a privilege, but 'tis granted me in consideration of those of JESUS CHRIST my Lord, for whose sake the eternal Father adopts me, and treats me as one of his Children. Since then thou art my Father and my Saviour, I presume to have recourse to thee, and beg of thee this Grace, that, as *David* admitted one, that was lame, to his Table, because he was Son to his dear Friend *Jonathan*, honoring thereby the Merits of the Father in the person of the Son: so it may please thee, O eternal Father, to suffer at thy Table a

wretched and deformed Sinner, not for his own sake, but for the Merits of JESUS CHRIST, whom thou hast so much lov'd, who is our second Adam, and true Father, and who lives and reigns with thee for ever and ever. Amen.

A Prayer after Communion, made by St. Thomas of Aquin.

I Give thee Thanks, O holy Lord, Almighty Father, and eternal G O D, for all the Benefits, thou hast so bountifully bestow'd on me; and particularly for that it has pleas'd thee, for no Merits of mine, but thro' the sole condescension of thy Mercy, to replenish me, a sinner, thy unworthy Servant, with the precious Body of thy only Son our Lord JESUS CHRIST. Suffer not, I beseech thee, this holy Communion to render me guilty, and liable to the punishment, which those deserve, who come unworthily to it; but grant on the contrary, that it may powerfully intercede for the remission of my sins. Let it be a Rampart to preserve me in the Faith, and a Shield to repel the Darts of my Enemy, who ceases not to attack my Will; that he may turn it against thee. Let it destroy all my Vices, root out all my sensual Desires, and augment in me Patience, Charity, and Humility; and all other Vertues: let it settle a firm and solid peace in my Soul, and strongly defend me against all the Assaults and Stratagems of my visible and invisible Enemies: let it unite me strictly to thee during this Life, and make me happily end in thee: so that in fine it may please thee to receive me, a sinner, to that unspeakable Banquet, where thou art the true Light, where thou fully satisfy'st thy
Elect,

Elect, and where thou thy self art their Joy, and their perfect Felicity, for ever and ever. Amen.

A Meditation after the Communion.

O Most gracious and most merciful G O D, what Thanks can I render to thee, who, being King of Kings and Lord of Lords, hast this day vouchsaf'd to visit my Soul, to enter into my House, and make thy self one thing with me by the inestimable vertue of this holy Sacrament? How shall I acknowledge this Honor? What shall I return thee for this Benefit, and what Thanks canst thou receive of so poor and weak a Creature for so rich and precious a Gift? For thou art not content in this admirable Mystery to make us partakers of thy sovereign Divinity; but hast communicated also to us thy Humanity, and all the Merits, thou hast gain'd us by it. Thou hast given us herein thy Flesh, and thy Blood, and hast therewith admitted us to a share in all the Wealth and Riches, thou hast purchas'd both by the one and by the other. O wonderful Communication! O incomparable Gift, a little understood by men, but worthy to be celebrated with eternal Praises! O Repairer of our Souls! Couldst thou bestow on them any other Treasure, which might be comparable to this? Thy words were as full of Truth, as of Love, when in thy Prayer thou saidst to thy Father: *I Joh. 17. v. 6. sanctify my self for them, that they may be sanctify'd in the Truth.* O new manner of sanctifying, which costs the Sanctifier so dear! 'Tis thou, that bearest Holiness; 'tis I, who reap the Fruit of it: Thou labor'st, and I have the profit: Thou

S 3

becom'st

becom'st poor; and I grow rich: Thou suffrest the Punishment; and I receive the Pardon: In fine thou shedst even to the last drop of thy Blood; and I recover Health and Life by it. Those terrible Sorrows, which thou hast endur'd, those Buffets, those Thorns, those Nails, and that precious Blood, which thou hast shed, have satisfy'd the heavenly Father for me. Thy Tears have washt me, thy Wounds have cur'd me, and the Stripes, thou receiv'dst, have paid for me. Happy Communication, wonderful Fellowship for those, who have contracted it, since it renders such unspeakable Treasures common to them. What have we brought of ours, to be partakers of them? what have we given, to receive such great things? 'Tis an effect of thy sole Grace and Goodness. The Sun enlightens, the Fire warms, the Water refreshes, because 'tis their nature to produce these Effects: and 'tis thine, O Lord, to shew Mercy, and to pardon; but what is most admirable, to pardon others, and not pardon thy self. Thy very Nature is Goodness, and that not a simple and common Goodness, but a sovereign one: and as 'tis the property of a simple Goodness to communicate it self simply: so 'tis the property of a sovereign Goodness to communicate it self sovereignly. 'Tis thus, that thou hast dealt with us, since thou hast given thy self entirely to us. If thou wert born into the World, 'twas to become our Brother; if thou hast eaten, 'twas to be our Food; if thou hast suffer'd Death, 'twas to be the Ransom of that, which we deserv'd; and if thou reign'st in Heaven, 'tis to be our Recompence.

In fine, my Soul, to speak in one word, if thou wilt all at once comprehend the Benefits,
 thou

thou obtain'st, when thou receiv'st this divine Sacrament, consider those, which our Lord brought to the World, when he came into it: for as descending down on Earth, he gave us the life of Grace, with whatever else accompanies it: so entering into thee by this way, he gives thee the same Life. O blessed Nourishment, by which the Children of Men become Children of GOD, and by which our Humanity dies happily, that GOD may live in it! O Bread, full of sweetness, and worthy our Admiration, which nourishest the Soul, and not the Flesh; which strengthest the Heart, and burdenest not the Body; which rejoycest the Mind without distracting the Understanding; which by thy virtue stiftest Sensuality, and destroy'st in us our human Will, that the divine may reign in its stead.

What Thanks can I then give thee, O my Lord, if the Thanks ought to bear some proportion to the Greatness of the Benefit? I learn in *Exodus*, that thou commandedst *Moses* to take a Vessel of Gold, to fill it with Manna, and to lay it up in the Ark of the Testament, that it might be there kept, to put all the Posterity of the *Israelites* in mind, with what sort of Nourishment their Fathers were fed during forty years in the Desert. If thou wouldst then have so great a value to be set on that corruptible Food, and appointedst, that it should be kept, as an eternal Monument, in a place of so great veneration, what Esteem ought not we to make of this incorruptible Meate, which gives eternal life to those, who receive it worthily? I clearly see, that there is as much difference between the first and second Food, as there is between the first and second Benefit, and consequently between the acknow-

ledgment, which is due to them. That Food
 was earthly; this is heavenly: That fed only
 Bodies; this nourishes Souls: That gave not true
 Life to those, who did eat of it; this gives eter-
 nal Life to those, who feed on it; and in fine
 there cannot be any Comparison between them,
 since those two Meats are as different, as the
 Creature is from the Creator. If thou neverthe-
 less, O my Saviour, wouldst, that the memory of
 this first Favor should never be abolisht, but that
 thy People should pay thee a perpetual Homage
 for having preserv'd their Lives by this corrupti-
 ble and perishable Manna; what oughtst thou to
 expect from us, to whom thou hast given eter-
 nal Life by this heavenly and divine Bread?
 Man is too weak to give thee thanks for it, and
 'twould be a rashness to think of finding in this
 Life the Praises we owe thee. There remains
 then in my inability no other Remedy for the
 acquitting my self of my Duty, but to have re-
 course to thee thy self, and say to thee with thy
 Prophet: *I will take the Cup of Salvation, and will*
invocate the Name of my Lord; that is, I will pay
 my Debts by new Obligations, and beg of thee
 new Favors for the sake of the first. I beseech
 thee then, O Lord, that thou wilt be pleas'd to
 accept this venerable Sacrament in satisfaction
 for all my Faults, and all my Sins, and to obtain
 the entire and perfect Amendment of my Life:
 Repair by it all my Falls, and supply by it all
 the Defects, which spring from my Misery, de-
 stroy in me by it, whatsoever may be displea-
 sing to thy divine Eyes, and make me a man ac-
 cording to thy Will: Grant me by it, that I may
 strongly adhere to thee, perfectly and constantly
 love thee, and continue united in thee, to the
 honor

Psal. 115.

v. 13.

honor and glory of thy Name. Shew mercy to all Sinners, bring back to thy Church all those, whom Heresie and Schism has separated from it; enlighten all the Faithful, to know thee better, incorp all those, that are in Troubles and Afflictions: Assist all those, for whom I am oblig'd to offer thee my Prayers. Comfort those, who have given me Birth, and Education, my Kinsfolks, Benefactors, Friends, and Enemies: Take pity on all those, for whom thou hast shed thy Blood, pardon the Living, and fill them with thy Graces, and grant to the Dead Rest and eternal Glory, who livest and reignest World without end, Amen.

A Meditation for one to exercise himself in on the day of holy Communion, in considering the Greatness of this Mystery, and giving Thanks to our Lord for this incomparable Benefit.

WERE all the Creatures both in Heaven and Earth chang'd into Tongues, and did they all joyn themselves with me, to give thee Thanks for the Benefit, I come now from receiving; yet would they not, O my GOD, be able to perform it, as thou deserv'st. What Praises, O my Saviour, shall I give thee for having on this happy day vouchsaf'd to visit me, comfort me, and honor me with thy Presence? When the Mother of thy Fore-runner, fill'd with the Holy Ghost, saw entring into her House the Virgin, which bare thee in her Womb, amaz'd at so great a Wonder, she cry'd out: *Whence is this* Luk. 1. 43.

to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come unto me? What ought I then to do, who am but a Worm of the Earth, seeing, that my Mouth has receiv'd, and my Stomach contain'd a consecrated Host, in which is comprehended the same GOD, who came to visit St. Elizabeth? With how much more reason may I cry out; Whence is this extraordinary Favor befallen me, that not only the Mother of my GOD, but my GOD himself, and the sovereign Lord of all things, has been pleas'd to come to me? To me, who have so long been the Habitation of Satan, to me, who have so often offended him, to me, who have so often oppos'd his Designs, and by my so frequent rejecting him rendred my self unworthy to receive him? Whence then have I this Favor, that the King of Kings and Lord of Lords is come to me? that he, whose Throne is in Heaven, whose Footstool is on Earth, whose Officers are Angels, whose Praises are publish'd by the Stars of the Morning, and whose Power governs the whole Earth, should so far abase himself, as to come into so contemptible a place? Thou, O my King, wouldst be born in a Stable amongst Beasts, wouldst be deliver'd into the hands of Sinners, and descend even to Hell. It well appears, O my GOD, that thou art not chang'd, and that thou retain'st the same love for Sinners, since thou still dost every day, what thou once didst for them.

Psal. 98. v. 5.

Had thy Goodness condescended to come unto me in any other manner, it had still been an Effect of thy very great Mercy: But now, O Lord, that thou hast not only been pleas'd to visit me, but hast also vouchsaf'd to enter into me, to dwell in me, to transform me into thee, and make me one

one and the same thing with thy self by so admirable an Union, that thy sacred mouth has found nothing more fit to express it, than to compare it with the Union, which thou hast with thy Almighty Father, this is, what far surpasses, and is altogether incomprehensible to human Understanding. *David* wondred at thy care of man, when he said; *What is man, that thou art mindful of him.* But 'tis far more to be admir'd, that GOD not only remembers man; but that he makes himself Man for him, that he dwells with him, that he dies for him, that he feeds him with his own substance, and makes himself one and the same thing with him. *Solomon* begg'd of GOD, if it were possible, that he would actually reside in the Temple, he had been so many years a building; but 'tis a much greater wonder that GOD, who dwells in the Heavens, should after a far more excellent manner make his Abode in a poor Soul, who has scarce labor'd so much as one only day to prepare him a Lodging. All created Nature is rapt with Admiration, to see GOD made Man, to see him descend from Heaven to Earth, and continue nine months inclos'd in a Virgins Womb: These indeed are wonderful things, and fit to be admir'd, but 'tis also true, that the Womb of this Virgin was fill'd with the Holy Ghost, that 'twas purer than the Stars of Heaven, and so a Lodging, worthy the Son of GOD; but that this Lord should dwell in my Heart, that he would chuse for his Habitation a place, so filthy and full of darkness, is the highest and most amazing Excess, to which his Mercy could ascend. Let the Angels then bless thee, O my Lord, for so excellent a Favor, and so incomparable a Mercy:

cy: thou well shewst, that thou art the supreme Good, since thou vouchsafest so perfectly to communicate thy self, and hast invented so admirable a Means to render us partakers of thy Goodness.

But how far ought both our Admiration and our Acknowledgment to extend, if we consider, what the new Benefit is, and what the Privilege, which this divine Sacrament brings us? What does thy Church teach me of the Happiness, that befalls me, and the Good, thou dost me in this venerable Mystery? I have there a Seal, markt with thy Name, for an inviolable Assurance, that thou art my Father, and not only my Father, but also the Bridegroom of my Soul, since I understand, that the principal effect of this Sacrament is to entertain our Souls with spiritual Delights, and to make them one and the same thing with thee. If it be so, and if the Heart is to be judg'd by the Works, who can doubt, but that thou discoverst to us in this admirable Work a fatherly Heart, and indeed art a Father? Masters are not wont to use Caresses towards their Servants, but Fathers towards their Children; and that principally, when they are yet little, and whilst they love them with most tenderness: for 'tis the Fathers Goodness to give them in that age, not only what is necessary for their Life, but also for their Recreation. Thou didst not heretofore treat thy People in this manner, thou dealtst with them like a Lord and Master, thou keptst this great Effect of thy Love a long time conceal'd from the World, and delay'dst the discovery of it till the time of thy coming on Earth, with the happy tidings of the Gospel. Thus in all thy other Sacraments, and
in

in all thy other Benefits thou hast only shewn me, that thou art my King, my Saviour, my Pastor, my Physician ; but in this, in which thou wouldst after so high a manner unite thy self to my Soul, and caress her with such wonderful tenderness, thou hast very clearly made known, that thou art my Bridegroom, that thou art my Father, and such a Father, as loves his Children with incomparable Goodness. This is, what I manifestly discern, and this is, what all the Favors, thou shewst me in this Sacrament, sufficiently teach me. There is no deceit in thy Works, as they shew outwardly, so they are inwardly : for by the Effects I know the Cause, by the Works I judge, what is the Heart, and thou canst not treat me with so much Indulgence and Sweetness, without having for me a true fatherly Heart. If the Manna, in which were found all sorts of tastes, and whatsoever the mouth could desire most agreeable and delicious, was a Mark of thy Affection, and the tenderness of thy Heart towards thy first-born Children ; what must the Love be, which thou at this day bearest us, since thou so liberally givest us thy divine Manna, which as far exceeds the Manna of the Desert in sweetness, as Heaven is above the Earth ? O celestial Nourishment, Bread of Life, Fountain of Delights, Vein of all Vertues, Death of all Vices, Fire of Love, Medicine of Health, Refection of Souls, Health of Spirits, royal and divine Banquet, and admirable Taste of eternal Felicity ! What shall I say then, O my GOD ? what Thanks can I give thee ? with what excess of love can I acknowledge so extraordinary a Benefit ? If being, what thou art, thou so lov'st a vile Creature, who is less than a Worm of the Earth ;

Earth; How should not I love thee, O my GOD, who with all thy Greatness, and all thy Majesty condescendest to be the Bridegroom of my Soul? Let me love thee then, O Lord, let me desire thee above all things, be thou my Meat, and my Drink. O amorous Sweetness! O Love, whose Pleasure is inestimable! Let my Soul feed on thee, and let my Bowels be fill'd with thy Delights! O Food, more delicious than whatsoever is most pleasing on Earth, Meat of the Strong, make me to grow in thee, augment, what thy Presence puts in me, that I may be worthy happily to enjoy thee! Children of *Adam*, blind men, what is't, you do? what do you pretend to in the World? If you seek Love, here is the noblest and sweetest, that can be desir'd: if you look for Pleasures, where will you find greater, and more purer than these? If you aim at Wealth, here is the Treasure of Heaven, the Price of the World, and an Ocean of Riches: in fine, if you aspire to Honors, you will find here all the Majesty of GOD, who comes to honor you.

The Second Part of this Meditation.

Since thou hast already done me the favor to receive me into thy company, to place me at thy Table, to give me share of thy Careless, to heap on me thy Benefits, and to bind me to thee with such strong and strait Bonds of Love; I from this time, O my Saviour, renounce all other loves for love of thee. Let there be no longer any World for me, or any worldly vanity: be gone from me, ye deceitful Goods, which I have so much lov'd: here is the only and sovereign Good,

Good. 'Tis not reasonable, that having tasted the Bread of Angels, I should return to the Food of Beasts: 'tis not fit, that having receiv'd GOD into my House, I should let any thing vain or unprofitable enter into it. Should a Woman of mean condition be marry'd to a King, she would soon leave that State of Poverty, which environ'd her, to appear in the Equipage of a Queen. This ought my Soul to imitate: for having been exalted to the Dignity, in which this august Sacrament has plac'd her, how can she again abase her self to the infamous condition, to which her old Habits had reduc'd her? How can she open that Heart to worldly thoughts, into which she has already receiv'd the Lord of the World? How can she lodge in her self any profane thing, having been consecrated by the Divine Presence? *Solomon* could not consent, that his Wife, who was Daughter to King *Pharaoh*, should dwell in his house at *Jerusalem*, because the Ark of the Testament had some time reposed in it. If this so wise and understanding King would not permit his lawful Wife, who was a Princess of so great Quality, to inhabit a Palace, where the Ark of GOD had a little while remain'd, only because this Princess was descended of an heathen Family; Can I suffer anything, that is wicked and heathenish, in an heart, where GOD himself would stay? What a disorder would it be, that impious desires should be still found in a place, where GOD has made his abode? or that a Mouth, thro' which he has graciously condescended to pass, should utter filthy words? The same *Solomon*, having once sacrific'd in the Porch of the Temple, ordain'd, that it should remain sanctify'd, and never after
be

2 Paral. 8.
v. 17.

3 Kin. 8.
v. 64.

be put to any profane use. Is it not much more fit, that my Soul should be now an holy place, since it has had the happiness to receive him, of whom all the Sacrifices and all the Sacraments of the old Law were but the Figure.

Since it has pleas'd thee, O my Saviour, to honor me with thy visit, grant me the Grace to correspond in some sort to this Favor; thou never conferrest extraordinary Honor on any one, without granting him powerful assistance to preserve it, and if by thy adorable Presence I have receiv'd from thee an Honor, which surpasses all others, let thy sovereign Power sanctify me, that I may be able to satisfy my Obligations. Wheresoever thou hast entred, thou hast shewn this merciful Conduct. Thou entrest into the chaste Womb of thy Mother, and as thou thereby exaltedst her to the highest Glory, so thou at the same time gav'st her the greatest Grace to maintain it. Being yet inclos'd within this Sanctuary, thou entrest into the House of St. Elizabeth, and there by thy presence sanctify'dst her Child, gav'st him heavenly Joy, and fill'dst his Mother with thy Spirit. Thou entrest into the World, to converse with men, and as by thy coming on Earth thou rais'dst them to a wonderful degree of Honor; so by a wonderful Grace thou repair'dst their Faults, and sanctify'dst them, when they were wicked. And in fine thou descendest into Hell, and of Hell thou mad'st it a Paradise, rendring those happy by thy presence, whom thou honor'dst with thy visit. Nor hast thou, O Lord, only wrought these Wonders, when personally present: The Ark of the Testament entred into the House of Obededom, and immediately thou pour'dst forth all thy Benedictions on it; and

and on whatsoever belong'd to that good *Israelite*. Since then it has pleas'd thee thro' a greater Mercy to enter into so poor a Dwelling, as that of my Soul, since it has pleas'd thee to abide in it, begin to bless thy Servants House, and grant me Grace to answer this Honor: Enrich and Adorn the Place of thy Habitation, and render it fitting for thee: Thou wouldst have me be like that happy Sepulchre, in which thy sacred Body was laid; give me therefore the Qualities, that were observ'd to be in it. That Sepulchre was of Stone, give me Firmness: there was in it a Shroud, grant me the Humility, represented by it, since 'tis so necessary for me: Myrrh also was found there, which is the Symbol of Mortification, make me dy to all my irregular Desires, and to my own Will, that I may live only to thee. By establishing thy Abode in me, thou wouldst have me be, as the Ark of the Testament; grant me therefore this Favor, that, as the Ark contain'd nothing but the Tables of the Law, my Heart may entertain no Thoughts, or Desires, but of conforming it self entirely to thy Law. Thou lest me know by the Effects of this great Sacrament, that thou art my Father, since thou treatst me in it as thy Child; but being thy Child, give me thy Grace, that I may worthily correspond to this Benefit by loving thee not only with a strong and solid Love, but also with a Love, full of Tenderness. Let all my interior Powers melt and be absorpt in thy Love, and let the sole Remembrance of thy so sweet, and so amiable Name make all the Joy of my Heart. Give it the Sentiments of a true Child, that is, the Obedience, Love, and Respect, which are due to thee, as its Father. Let

T

all

all my Hope and Confidence be in thee, and let me in all the Troubles and Afflictions of this Life have recourse to thee, like a good Son, who casts himself into his Fathers Arms, where he finds his most assured Refuge. But above all thou wouldst discover to me in this divine Mystery, that thou hadst for my Soul all the Love, which a Bridegroom can have for his Bride; Give me the same Heart for thee; let my Affection answer thine; Let my Love be like thine, faithful, chaste, and tender, and let it be so strong and powerful, that nothing may ever separate me from thee. O most chaste Bridegroom of our Souls! open thy divine Arms, and bind my Soul to thee with such strong Knots, that both in Life and Death I may remain inseparably fastened to thee. 'Twas to form so strait an Union as this, that thou ordain'dst this holy Sacrament. Thou knowest, that the Creature is much better in thee, than in it self; that it has from thee all its Strength and Power; that it is of it self only Misery and Weakness; that without thee 'tis lost like a Drop of Water, which, being left alone in the Air, is dry'd up in a moment; but being thrown into the Sea, and united with its Beginning, abides for ever. Draw me then, O my Lord, from my self, and receive me into thee; because in thee I find Life; and in my self I find Death: I become strong, if I am in thee; and if I am in my self, I abate, and am lost: being in thee, I obtain a firm and stable Condition; and of my self I am only Vanity and Corruption. Depart not then from me, O good JESUS, depart not, O Lord, but *abide with us: for it is evening, and the day is now gone:* And since I have been so happy, as to lodge thee
this

this day in my house, where I may treat with thee alone about the Concerns of my Soul, I will not lose this favorable Opportunity : I will Gen. 32.
v. 26.
not let thee depart, till thou hast given me thy Blessing.

Change my old Name, and give me a new one, that is, a new Being, and a new manner of Life. Make me lame of one Leg, like *Jacob*, and let the other continue sound and vigorous, that is, let the love of the World grow weaker in me every day, and let the love of thee continue whole, or rather grow daily stronger, as long as I shall live, to the end, that all other loves, and all the desires of this World being extinct and slain in me, I may love thee alone. O my Saviour, I desire thee alone, I think on thee alone, let me abide in thee alone, let me live for thee alone, let all my Thoughts and Cares respect thee alone, to thee alone let me have recourse in all my Troubles; and let me expect and receive Assistance from none but thee alone; Who livest and reignest World without end. Amen.

Then you shall be converted to God, and shall have with you your whole heart, and shall have seriously endeavored to purify your souls by these two great Sacraments, of which we have treated, it remains that you should be directed to amend your imperfections, and to regulate your life. For this purpose therefore I beging give you the following Considerations: And as I have in the production of her Works always from the less to the more; that I may always lead you to what is best, I shall first direct you to amend your life in the first place. I will keep this Order in the instruction, by giving you on the second day to give up the will, and two manners of living Well, and one

THE FOURTH BOOK.

Containing

Two Principal Rules of a Christian Life.

The Preface.

After you shall be converted to GOD with your whole Heart, and shall have seriously endeavor'd to purify your Souls by these two great Sacraments, of which we have treated, it remains, that you speedily set your self to amend your Imperfections, and regulate your Life. For this purpose therefore I design to give you the following Counsels: And as Nature in the production of her Works goes always from the less to the more; that is, from what is of less to what is of greater Perfection; so Grace ordinarily does the same. Wherefore I will keep this Order in the Instruction, I purpose to give you on this Subject, establishing two Rules, and two Manners of Living Well:
one

one for those, who are newly converted, and desire to be sav'd; the other for such, as besides this aspire to an higher Perfection, and endeavor daily to go forward in the way of Vertue.

For the better comprehending my Intent, you shall observe, that all the Instruction, conducing to a good Life, is by the Prophet *David* divided into two principal Parts: the one of avoiding Evil, and the other of doing Good, that is, the one consists in banishing Vices from our Souls, and the other in adorning them with Vertues. I see not in this matter any Division, perfecter, or clearer than this: because that by observing these two things one becomes a new Man, and a new Creature, destroying by the first the Image of the Old Man, and forming by the second that of the New. Thus you render your selves supernatural and divine Creatures, since, as Man was created for a supernatural and divine End, which is to see God in his Glory, so the Life, which disposes to this end, is divine and supernatural, according to that Maxim of Philosophy, that the End and the Means ought to be proportion'd, and of one and the same Order. And altho' these two things are as well in Practice, as in Precept, inseparable, since Vices cannot be overcome but by the Help of Vertues, nevertheless the better to distinguish, what I pretend to teach you, and give it more Light, I will, as much as I can, separate the one from the other. 'Tis requisit also to observe, that of the things, which are propos'd both in this Discourse, and others, that treat of Piety, some are of Obligation, and others of Will, or Perfection; that is, some are of Precept, as the Commandments of GOD, and the Church;

and others are of Counsel, as all the good Advices and Exhortations, contain'd in holy Scripture, which conduce to the better observing, of what is commanded; and to the arriving at a greater Perfection. 'Tis of very great importance to give you this Advertisement at first, that you may understand, what is of Necessity, and what depends on the Will alone, and thereby know your Duties: for greater Care must be taken to perform, what is of Obligation, than what is Voluntary; and the first must never be left for the second; the contrary being a very great Error and Disorder, yet such as does but too frequently happen. Wherefore I shall in the beginning of this Book very briefly declare the things, that are of Obligation; and shall afterwards add many others, which may help you more easily to perform these first and indispensable Duties, and bring you to obtain an higher Perfection. For tho' it be true, that the keeping of the Commandments is sufficient to Salvation, yet in the way of GOD to continue in the same state, and say, 'tis enough, is to go backward: wherefore, besides the essential things, and such, as are absolutely necessary, I shall adjoin many others, that are useful and profitable, for the sake of such generous Souls, as desire daily to grow and encrease in Vertue.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

The first Rule of a Christian Life, treating of the Victory over Sin, and the Means to destroy it.

IF you desire then with all your Heart to give your self to GOD, and to save your soul, know before all things, that the most important Part of this Affair, in comparison of which all others whatsoever are as nothing, consists in one only Point, which is to form in your Soul a firm Resolution never to commit any Mortal Sin on any occasion whatever, either for the sake of Wealth, Honor, or Life it self, or any other thing in the World. And as an honest Woman in a Family, and an Officer in an Army, are always fully determin'd rather to dy, than to be guilty of the least Infidelity, the one against her Husband, and the other, against his Prince: so you, as being true *Christians*, ought to be firmly resolv'd, rather to lose all things, even your own Lives, than to consent to so great a Treason, as is committed against GOD by a Mortal Sin. The Reason of this is, because, as St. Paul says, the End and principal Aim of the *Christian* Religion is Charity, which consists in loving GOD and our Neighbour, to which nothing is so directly opposit, as Mortal Sin: in so much that he, who commits it not, essentially fulfills the Law of Charity. Our Lord himself

Mat. 19.
v. 17.

taught us this by the Answer, he gave to the young man in the Gospel, that the faithful keeping of the Commandments is the Way to Heaven, and the Means to obtain Eternal Life. And we know, that not to commit any Mortal Sin is to keep them, since no man sins mortally but by transgressing these Commandments, and consequently that GOD's Law and Man's Salvation consists essentially in this Point, in keeping inviolably the Ten Commandments of GOD, and the Five, prescribed us by the Church. And this I the more particularly observe to you, to the end you may understand, that the Seven Sins, commonly call'd Mortal, are not always such, but only, when they violate some one of these Commandments: as when the Gluttony is such, that it breaks the commanded Fasts; when the Sloth is so great, that the Pleasure of sleeping hinders us from hearing of Mass on a Day of Obligation; or when Wrath transports us to utter injurious Words against our Neighbor, and so of the rest.

This is in few words the Summary, or rather the Principal and Total of what a good Christian is bound to do; the which is sufficient for his Salvation. But because 'tis not so easy, as may be imagin'd, fully to discharge this Obligation, and that on the contrary we ordinarily meet with very great Impediments on the part of the World, which is full of Snares and Dangers; on the part of our Flesh, whose Inclination sways us to Evil; and on the part of the Devil, who daily makes War upon us; you ought to be continually on your guard against these Enemies, and endeavor to subdue them by the Assistance of the Vertues, which will facilitate

tate your Conquest over them: Of this we are now going to treat, and shall particularly note to you such things, as may be serviceable to you in attaining them.

6. I.

The first is to consider attentively, what a strange Evil Mortal Sin is, by taking a thorow and particular View of its Deformity and Injustice; since it dares to attack a G O D, from whom we have receiv'd such precious Benefits, and to whom we are by so many Titles so strictly bound. There is no *Christian*, but acknowledges, that G O D is the King and Master of all created things; that he is their Beginning and their End, that from him proceed universally all our Goods, that he is an immense Ocean of all Perfections, that 'tis he, who created all men, who redeem'd and sanctify'd them, who continually preserves them, and in fine prepares for them Eternal Glory and Happiness. As his Benefits are innumerable, so are our Obligations, and all our Duties are transgress'd at one and the same time, when we are so unhappy as to commit a Mortal Sin. This made *William* Bishop of *Paris* say, that in one only Mortal Sin are found after a manner the Deformities of all the Mortal Sins in the World: and he adds, that this detestable Sin is a kind of spiritual Rebellion, because the man, who suffers himself to be carry'd away by it, revolts against his Sovereign; he puts the Keys of his Heart, that is his own Soul, into his Enemies Hands by way of Homage, and makes himself his Vassal.

Mortal

Mortal Sin is also in some sort a Sacrilege, since it profanes the living Temple of our Heart; which was consecrated to GOD: 'Tis a Crime of Apostacy, since it makes us leave GOD's side, and betake our selves to the Devil's, whose Works we had renounc't by Baptism. 'Tis a Spiritual Adultery, since it causes a Soul, that had contracted a Marriage with GOD, to abandon her self treacherously to all the Creatures, which she particularly loves. 'Tis a Theft, since Man, belonging so many ways to GOD, steals himself from his Service, and deprives him, of what so lawfully pertains to him. In fine, since we are oblig'd to give GOD all the Honor, Respect, Obedience, Fidelity, and in general all the Homages, that are due to all Creatures, of what Condition soever they are, and much more than this; it necessarily follows, that one only sin against him infinitely surpasses all the other Faults and Offences, that may be committed in the world. Wherefore with very great Reason does an holy Doctor cry out against this Monster in these Terms: O Evil, not sufficiently understood, which tak'st from Almighty GOD the Respect, that is due to him, which contemn'st his Majesty, which injur'st his Greatness, which extinguish'st Vertue, which destroy'st Grace, which withdraw'st us from the Sovereign Good, which mak'st us lose Eternal Happiness, which darken'st the Understanding, which disorder'st the Will, which art the most deadly Poyson of the Devil, which engageth thy Followers to the Pains of Hell, which art the Destroyer of the World, the infallible Guide of Perdition, the Death of the Sinner, the malignant Seed of Satan, and the Gate of Hell, and which

which mak't men mad : Abominable Sin, which art the Net and Snare, wherein the unwary suffer themselves to be caught ; which art the Plague of Souls, which mak't men become Imitators of the wicked Spirits : horrible Darkness, intolerable Stench, extrem'st of all Filthiness, Vileness, lower than which nothing can be imagin'd, cruel Beast, greatest of all Miseries, and in fine Cause and Original of all our Evils.

This is one of the principal Considerations, that may excite in you a true Hatred of Sin. Reflect seriously on it, and make use also for the same effect of the others, I have set before you in the second Book of Penance, as to represent to your self what you lose by Sin, how much GOD abhors it, and the extreme Outrage, you commit against him, when you fear not to offend him. I mention not the rest, for the avoiding of Repetitions.

§. 2.

The second Means to advance in Vertue, is discreetly to avoid the Occasions, which may make you fall into Sin. I put in this rank Gaming, ill Company, dangerous Conversations, overmuch Talking, and particularly too frequent Discourse and Famillarity with Women, how honest and virtuous soever. For if Man is become so weak by sin, that of himself and thro' his own Misery he falls and sins every moment without any ones provoking him to it, what can he promise for himself, if occasion sollicit him, and he is stirr'd up by the presence of the Object, and

and the opportunity to Sin? Fly then carefully all these sorts of Occasions, if you desire to be GOD's true servants, and assure your selves, that, commonly speaking, we are so far good, as we avoid the Occasions of being evil. Remember, that *David* was an holy Man, but the sight of a Woman, and the opportunity, he had to Sin, gave him a Fall, which he ceas'd not to bewail all his Life. Remember his Son *Salomon*, who was the wisest of all men, and so highly favor'd by GOD, that he was term'd our Lords Wel-beloved, and yet thro' the same occasion fell into the strangest of all Abandonments. GOD had commanded the *Jews*, not to marry with strange Women, for fear they might corrupt their Religion, and make them adore their Idols: *Salomon*, thinking himself secure from this danger, marry'd several such, and lov'd them so vehemently, that he was by their Artifices perswaded to build Temples to their false GOD's, and adore them. This is a Crime, that you will scarce believe, and which ought to make us tremble; yet 'tis true, and by it did this Prince, so renown'd for Wisdom, ruin himself, and all his Posterity was depriv'd of his Kingdom. Who then can esteem himself safe amongst occasions, when they overthrew these two great men, one of which was so holy, and the other so wise! Shun then the Occasions, as you would the Sin it self; and if you find your self drawn by Custom, or by Pleasure, to any one, that is dangerous, return into your self, and say to your Heart: Wretch as thou art, if thou canst not now resist a single Desire, which sways thee on this Occasion, how wilt thou be able to surmount its Power, and avoid the Danger, it casts thee into,

into, when it shall be strengthened by the Presence of the Object, thou art going to seek! Remember also, that 'tis to tempt GOD, and render your self unworthy his Assistance, if you do not on your part, what you ought, to deserve it.

But amongst these Temptations, the most ordinary is undoubtedly the Company of wicked Persons: the world is so full of them, that one can scarce go a step without meeting 'em: Keep your selves from them, if you desire not to sin. A mad Dog, and a Viper, ready to burst with Poyson, are nothing neer so dangerous, as Ill Company; and 'tis manifest, as the Apostle teaches us, that *Evil communications corrupt good manners.* Engrave then in your Heart this Saying of the Wise Man, *He, that walks with the Wise, shall be Wise, and he, that converses with Fools, shall partake of their Folly:* And again: *He, that touches Pitch, shall be defil'd therewith, and he, that keeps company with the Proud, shall fall into Pride.* Let Parents especially cause their Children carefully to keep themselves thus reserv'd, and let Masters and Governors take the same Care of the Youth, committed to their Charge: otherwise they will see all the Benefit of their Education, and the Labors of many years, lost in a moment.

1 Cor. 15.

v. 33.

Prov. 13.

v. 20.

§. 3.

The third Advice is, to repell betimes the first Assaults, and shake off immediately the least Evil Thought, before it get possession of your Heart: for thus you will resist with greater Ease, and more Merit; whereas delaying never
so

so little, you will find more difficulty in opposing the Mischief, and commit a new Sin, which will be at least Venial, and may sometimes prove Mortal. Consider, that the Fire, which does but just begin to kindle, is easily quencht, and the Plant, which was but lately set, is not hard to be pluckt up again; but if the Flame is once spread, and the Plant once rooted, then the Fire will not be put out, nor the Root pull'd up without abundance of Labor. A Town may without much difficulty be defended, before the Enemies are got into it; but when they have once found the Means to make a Breach, and take possession of it, 'twill be hard to drive them out again. When a Stone is yet on the Top of a Mountain, it may with ease be stay'd there; but if it once begins to roll, 'twill be almost impossible to resist the violence, which carries it. These Comparisons are common, yet to me they seem fit to shew, that, as Evil Thoughts are without any great Labor overcome, when they are resisted at the Beginning, so 'tis difficult to master them, when they have once taken root in our Heart. Now the best and speediest way to resist them, of what quality soever they are, is, as soon as ever they shall attack you, to set before the Eyes of your Soul JESUS CHRIST crucify'd with all the Anguish and Sorrow, that encompass't him on the Cross, the streams of Blood, which ran down from all his Body, and all the Wounds and Stripes, that appear'd on it; to reflect, how he suffer'd all these Torments for the Destruction of Sin, and to say to him, with your whole Heart: Is it possible, that thy Majesty should have put it self in this Condition, to the end I might not sin, and that nevertheless

theless I should not cease to offend thee? Remove from me, O Lord, this Unhappiness thro' thy infinit Mercy, and for the sake of that precious Blood, which thou hast shed for me. Help me, O my G O D, and forsake me not, since thou art my only Support, and to none but thee can I have recourse. When this shall befall you, if you shall be alone, 'twill be good also to make speedily the Sign of the Cross upon your Heart: for this exterior Action, accompany'd with Piety, has often force enough to drive away the interior Impression, which disquiets you.

St. Bernard writes, that a certain Religious Woman of his time was wont frequently to perform this holy Action, and that, her Grave being open'd some years after her Death, the Finger, with which she had so often made this venerable sign, was found still whole, tho' the rest of her Body were consum'd. Another Doctor writes, that there dy'd at *Strasbourg* a Prior of St. *Dominick's* Order, who had the same Devotion, and that some years after, his Grave being also open'd, there was seen engraven on the Bones, which cover'd the Region of the Heart, the perfect Figure of a Cross, the Foot of which was pointed, the three uppermost parts ending in three Flower-de-Luces: G O D being willing to shew by this exterior Mark, that Purity and Chastity were preserv'd in this holy Soul by the Remembrance and Power of the Sign of the Cross, which this holy Man often made on his Breast, to drive away the Temptations of the Enemy. This Doctor bears witness of this Wonder, as of a thing, he had seen with his own Eyes, affirming, that he travell'd Forty Miles,
only

only to be a spectator of it. I have related these two memorable Examples, to let you see, how much JESUS CHRIST honors those, who honor his Injuries, and to stir you up to make use of this Remedy, to the end you may obtain his Grace.

§. 4.

The fourth is, to examine your Conscience every Evening, before you go to bed: consider attentively, wherein you have sinn'd that day in thought, word, or deed, and particularly reflect on all the Discourses, in which you may possibly have offended. If you have told any Ly, if you wisht the Devil might have power over any of GOD's Creatures, if you have curs'd any one, if you have spoken any dishonest, slanderous, hasty, cholerick Words, or any other of that Nature. As to your Thoughts, if you have speedily and earnestly rejected such, as have come upon you against Vertue; on the contrary, if you have stay'd in them, and if you have not immediately shaken out of your Bosom these sparkles of Hell-fire. And as for Deeds, look with more exactness into the Obligations of your Condition, with those of your House and Family, and observe, how you have acquitted your self of them. This Exercise has been often recommended to us by the holy Fathers, amongst whom, to give you an Instance, I have made choice of St. Eusebius Emisennus, who in one of his Homilies has these words: *Let every man daily set his Conscience before his eyes and speak in this manner to himself: Let us see, whether*

ther I have pass'd this day without Sin, without Envy, without Contention, without Detraction: Let us see, whether I have done any thing for my own particular Good, or the Edification of others: Let us see, whether I have this day told a Ly, whether I have Sworn, whether I have suffer'd my self to be overcome with Anger, or any other irregular Passion, without having thought of doing any Good, or delivering my self by Good Works from Eternal Torments. Who can bring me back again this day, which I have unprofitably spent, or on which I have employ'd my self only in vain and dangerous Thoughts? After this sort, concludes this holy Father, you ought to repent, accuse, and condemn your selves before Almighty GOD in the privacy of your Closets, and of your Hearts.

But 'tis not sufficient to make barely this Review of your Consciences: to the end it may be more beneficial, you shall add to it some Penance, which you shall impose on your self for these sorts of sins. This voluntary Chastisement will render you more cautious, and more fearful to commit, what you ought not to let pass without Punishment. I knew a Person, who, to punish that part of his Body, which had offend'd GOD, us'd to put a Gag in his Mouth, when examining himself at night, he found, that he had let slip some indiscreet word. I have seen another, who was wont to discipline himself both for these sins of the Tongue, and other Defects, he might fall into. Thus besides GOD's being satisfy'd, since there's no Sin, but deserves its Punishment, the Soul, which is chastis'd, becomes more careful not to fall into Sin.

'Twill be also advantageous to propose to ones self every Week the attacking some particular Vice, and endeavoring to get the Victory over

it : the Flesh is difficultly brought to enter into this Combat, but for fear it should fall asleep in so commendable an Undertaking, 'twill do well to make it wear something, which may awaken it, and cause it to remember its Resolution. An Hair Girdle, a little Chain set with Pricks, or some other thing of this nature, known to Penitents, tho' but little painful, often produces wonderful Effects. In the mean time tho' you often fall, yet be not dismay'd ; but on the contrary, tho' you should fall a thousand times a day into such like Offences, get as often up again ; put not your confidence in your self, but in the superabundance of GOD's Mercy, and be not troubled to observe, that you have not yet wholly conquer'd any one of your Passions : because this is a Work, which requires Patience, and you will sometimes overcome in a little time, what you have with difficulty been struggling against many years. This ought to make you judge, how important this Victory is to you : and GOD sometimes also permits some *Je-buse*, that is, some Passion or some difficult Temptation to abide in the Soul, as he left the Remains of that Nation in the midst of his People, which he does to exercise your Vertue, and keep you in Humility, which is the Foundation of all other Vertues. Take care also at your arising in the Morning to face at first that Enemy, that is, that Inclination, or Sin, which most ordinarily makes War upon you ; arm your self against it with the Assistance of Prayer, and a strong Resolution never to have Peace with it, and draw up all your Forces, where you see the greatest danger.

Jud. 3.

§. 5.

The fifth is, to avoid, as much as shall be possible, Venial Sins, because they serve as a Disposition to Mortal ones. Persons, who are apprehensive of Death, forget nothing, they think requisite for the Preservation of their Health, and preventing such Diseases, as may bring them to the Grave: so all those, that desire to be exempt from Mortal Sins, which are the Death of the Soul, must take care to shun Venial ones: For they are true Diseases, and, if neglected, become capable to bring her to Death. For my part I hold it as a certain truth, that a just man, who has long liv'd well, and persever'd in Grace, will never fall into any Mortal Sin, unless he is negligent in having a due regard to himself, and makes little account of Venial Sins, which weaken his Soul, and deserve, that GOD should withdraw his Hand, that is, his Assistance, by which he will be more liable to temptation, and more easily overcome. For as no man immediately ascends to the highest Degree of Perfection, so likewise no man falls on a sudden into the Extremity of Disorder, both Good and Evil growing in us by little and little. Wherefore 'tis observ'd of *Job*, that Poverty attackt him, before he was assaulted by the Enemy: to shew us, that Souls rarely yield to Mortal Sin, till after they are become poor, and have lost their vigor by the multitude of their Negligences. JESUS CHRIST has also said, that, *if you are faithful in a little, you will be also faithful in much: and if you use Diligence in avoiding small Evils, you*

Luke 16.
v. 10.

will be secure against great ones. In the mean time you shall observe, that by Venial Sins we understand idle Words, immoderate Laughter, Eating, Drinking, and Sleeping beyond necessity, and other like things: tho' these are light Faults; and such, as at first do us no great hurt, yet do they however deprive us of great Benefits, chilling Devotion, and slackning that Fervor of Charity, which makes pure Souls behave themselves chearfully, and diligently, in whatsoever concerns GOD's Service.

The sixth is to embrace a manner of Life somewhat austere, not giving to your Flesh all, it may desire, either in eating, drinking, sleeping, cloathing, or any thing else, that flatters it. 'Tis your greatest Enemy, 'tis a Spring of Passions and irregular Desires, which dries not, and the more it is ram'd and weakned, the more feeble and languishing will the Passions be, which it produces. An hungry and barren Land yields only low and dry Plants, affording but little Juice; and on the contrary, that, which is fat and fruitful, brings forth strong and vigorous Trees, especially, if besides its natural Fertility, Care is taken to water it: the same difference is between the Passions in Bodies, which Ease and good Chear keeps plump and lusty, and in those, that are weakned and brought low by Fasting and other Mortifications. Go then to the Cause of your Disorders, if you will take away the Effects.

I have

I have already told you, that Vertue has no Enemy more obstinate and dangerous than this our sinful Flesh: 'tis she, that with the violence of her Desires opposes all our good Designs; 'tis she, that thro' the Passion, she has to be always tenderly treated, disturbs all our holy Exercises. Prayer, Reading, Silence, Fasting, and Watching, are to her intolerable Constraints: look on her then as the most powerful Obstacle of your Salvation, and set your self to resist her: for if thro' a cowardly Complacence you once accustom her to become your Mistress, you must no longer speak of the Practice of Vertue, or Exercises of Piety: but if on the contrary you generously and continually oppose the first Assaults, she shall make upon you, and omit not for some time to fight against her vicious Inclinations, after you shall have gain'd this Advantage, and by exercise contracted an happy habit of mastering her, and contemning her Efforts, all will be easy to you: for Vertue has of it self nothing, that is difficult, it being only the Corruption of our Flesh, which makes her appear harsh. The most effectual Remedy, and true Salt against her Corruption is Abstinence, which purifies her, dries her, and makes her obedient to the Spirit. For, according to the Opinion of a famous Doctor, *Abstinence humbles the Flesh, exalts the Spirit, and tames the Passions: It satisfies for Sins, and (which is both more admirable and more profitable) by destroying Covetousness, cuts off the Root of all Evils, since those, that are contented with little, have no cause to desire superfluities.* This Vertue of Abstinence will not only deliver you from all other Evils, but also from all the Vexations of Spirit, from all the Cares

and Anxieties, with which they are turmoil'd, who will not have any thing wanting to the Splendor of their Expences, and the Delights of their Bodies; and thus you will continue free and at liberty to give your selves wholly to GOD. Twas for this reason, those ancient Fathers of *Egypt* exercis'd on themselves such strange Mortifications: This was also the Motive to that extreme Poverty, of which *St. Francis* and his Followers made so particular a Profession: for in effect the Austerity of the one and the Poverty and Bareness of the other tended both to the same End.

If then, Brethren, you desire to be true lovers of our Lord, give no Intermiſſion to your Tears, till you are arriv'd at that point of Vertue, to treat your Body as an Enemy, as a Tyrant, or as a treacherous Slave: Let it as the common Proverb is, be ill fed, and well beaten, or at least deal with it, as you see wise and discreet Fathers do with their Children. You see, they bring them up in so harsh a manner, that they seem to be their Enemies, never careſſing them in the least, but always shewing them a severe and rigid Countenance. Nor do they therefore love them the less; but in this do violence to their own Nature, observing this Conduct, only because the Condition or Good of these dear Children require it. A true Servant of GOD ought in this manner to treat his Body, till he has attain'd to this point, let him never believe, he has done any great matter, or made any considerable Advancement in the Way of Vertue. O how happy are those, who are in fine gotten to it, who have reduc'd their Body to suffer this treatment, who have thus humbled
it

it and brought it down, who have depriv'd it of Sleep and Food, who have forc't it to submit to the Spirit, and in this manner gloriously conquer'd Nature her self. Those, that have obtain'd this Happiness, live no longer according to Flesh and Blood, but according to the Spirit of JESUS CHRIST, they fight no longer under the Standards or Laws of corrupt Nature, since they have made themselves her Masters; and it may in some sort be said of them, that they are no longer meer Men, since they are become something more than Men. And thence you may know the horrible Corruption, and Blindness of this World, which thro' a Spirit, opposit to that of JESUS CHRIST, and to the Perfection, which *Christianity* requires, employs all its Cares, and all it Forces, only to content the Body, and make it live in delights.

§. 7.

A seventh Remedy is, to watch over your Tongue: 'Tis indeed one of the least Parts of your Body; yet by this you fall a thousand times a day, by this you suffer your selves every hour to slip into filthy Discourses, by this you utter Speeches, that are full of Wrath, Pride, and Vanity, by this you fear not to assert Lies, and by this Oaths, Curses, Detractions, Flatteries, and so many other Evils issue forth of your Mouth. Not without cause therefore did the wise man say, *That in many Words there wanteth* Prov. 10.
not Sin: and that Death and Life are in the Power v. 19.
of the Tongue. Wherefore I can give you no better Counsel, than to advise you, whenever you shall c. 18. v. 21

shall have occasion to speak to such persons, or of such matters, as you shall judge, there may be some danger of falling into ill Language, Lying, Bragging, or vain Glory, that you lift up your Eyes on high, and recommending your self to GOD with all your heart, say to him with the Prophet: *Set a Guard, O Lord, before my Mouth, and a Door of Circumstance to my Lips.* Remember also, when you enter into any Discourse, seriously to weigh all your Words, and to imitate the Vigilance and Care of a Traveller, who is oblig'd to pass a Brook on the top of certain slippery stones, laid o'rethwart it. But since this Matter is important, and requires a long discourse, we shall treat more largely of it hereafter.

§. 8.

The eighth is, that you permit not your heart to adhere with too much affection to visible things, as Honors, Riches, Children, Parents, Friends, and the like. When this Love is irregular, 'tis the most ordinary source of all the Sins, all the Cares, all the Vexations, all the Temptations, all the Extravagances, and all the Troubles, which happen in the World. As one of the Fowlers principal Arts is to take notice, what sort of Food is most pleasing to the Birds, they desire to catch: so 'tis the principal study of our Adversaries to observe carefully the things, to which our Inclinations carry us with greatest vehemence. These they make use of to draw us into their Nets, knowing, as a Poet says, that every one lets himself be transported by the Passion, that

Virg. Eclog.
2.

that most pleases him. 'Tis true, Men are endow'd with Reason to govern them; but yet, generally speaking, the greatest part of Men, if not all, follow their Passions: 'Tis for this reason they are call'd the Feet of the Soul, because they carry her, whether they will. And St. *Augustin* in the same sense says, that *Love is the Poise of the Soul, making her go, whithersoever it draws her.* Confess. l. 13. c. 9. If the love looks up to Heaven, the soul suddenly aspires thither; and if the love inclines to earthly things, the soul is bow'd down to the Earth: in fine, what the Weights are to a Clock, the Affections are to our Soul: it moves, as 'tis mov'd by them: and as for the keeping a Clock in due order, its weights must be so exactly proportion'd, that they be neither lighter, nor heavier, than the space between the hours, it is to strike, requires: so if you desire, that your Life should be well manag'd, endeavor to reduce your Affections to their lawful Use and Order, esteeming things, as they truly are, and loving them as much, as they are worthy of it. If you can attain to this degree, you will be at the highest point, to which your Vertues can ascend, since 'tis manifest, that the most part of them are employ'd only in ballancing and moderating our desires according to this sort of proportion.

To enter more securely into this Condition, be attentive never to let your Heart expand it self excessively towards visible and transitory things: if you find it begin to run after them, bring it back immediately to its duty, and keep your selves from loving them more, than they deserve, that is, consider them as perishable and uncertain Goods, of little continuance, and importance. Withdraw your Heart speedily from
them,

them, and at the same time lift it up to GOD, who is your only and sovereign Good. If you in this manner love temporal things, you will never despair, when you want them; if they are taken from you, you will suffer it patiently; and this is the only Means to avoid abundance of Sins, which People daily commit to obtain, increase, and keep them. Herein does the Point of this Important Affair consist: for having seriously renounc't this Love, you will have little more to fear from the Snares, the Enemy lays for you; as on the contrary, if you have not yet made this Renunciation, know, that you have not yet begun to render your selves Followers of JESUS CHRIST. This is, what himself very profoundly teaches in St. Luke, when, speaking of you under the shadow of a Parable, he says, *Which of you, purposing to build a Tower, doth not first sit down, and count the Charge, whether he hath sufficient to finish it? Lest perhaps, after he hath laid the Foundation, and is not able to finish it, all, that see it, begin to deride him, saying: This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what King, going to make War against another King, doth not first sit down, and examin, whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him, that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet far off, he sendeth Ambassadors, and desireth Conditions of Peace. So likewise, whosoever of you renounceth not all, that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple. This Comparison will perhaps appear to you a little obscure: for it seems at first, that there is no great Resemblance between the heaping up of Riches, or levying of Armies, and the renouncing, what one has: since the one tends to gather, and the other to disperse. But if you maturely*

Luke 14.
v. 28, 29, 30,
31, 32, 33.

maturely consider it, you will find, that there is nothing more suitable. And this heavenly Doctor, from whose Mouth it issu'd, well knew, that Poverty and the forsaking of all earthly things conduce as much towards the getting the better in Spiritual Combats, as a numerous Army does towards the gaining the Victory in a Battel, and a great stock of Money to the compleating of a Building. For as a Prince has so much the more reason to think his Dominions secure, as he has a more powerful Army on foot to defend them: so the poorer, and the more in want a man is of this World's Goods, the less does the Devil find, whereby to assault him. 'Twas for this cause, that St. Francis, and so many other Saints would live so poor, to the end, that possessing nothing on Earth, the World might have nothing to do with them, nor they with the World. But on the contrary, if the Devil sees, that you abandon your Heart to temporal things, and pursue them with too much vehemence, 'tis there, he lays his Nets and his Snares, and 'tis of them, he makes himself Arms to destroy you. If you love Honors, Wealth, Pleasures, or other things of that nature, he fails not to set before you a thousand means for the obtaining, what you desire, for the keeping, and encreasing it. Some of them may be lawful; others unlawful: and the Devil, making use of the Passion, which blinds you, causes you to find nothing ill, or contrary to G O D's Laws, in whatsoever may content your desires. Thus you are no longer guided by Reason or Justice, but by the Fury of your Passions. This Inconvenience is not alone: see here another more dangerous. There are often many persons, that aim at the same Mark: Now if in the End, you

you design, or the Means, you propose for the attaining it, you meet with any one, that stays you, or gives you the least hindrance, there immediately springs up Wrath, Envy, Hatred, Law-Suits, Injuries, and Fighting, and in fine, all sorts of violent Motions, that may put your Mind in vexation and disorder. The first violently stirs up the concupiscible part of your Soul, with all the different affections, that accompany it; and the second heats the irascible, with all the transports, and furies, which attend it: and so many storms and tempests, as arise in your Soul, expose it to a thousand sorts of dangers and shipwracks. 'Twas this made St. Paul say: that *Covetousness is the Root of all Evils*: Nor is it only that of Money, which is so; but also every other sort of irregular and excessive desire, there being none, which produces not abundance of evils.

1 Tim. 6.
v. 10.

This is signify'd to us by another Parable of the Gospel, which treats of the Marriage of the King's Son: some excus'd themselves from coming to it, because they were newly marry'd: others, because they had a purchase to make; and others on divers pretences of business or employs, representing to us by these Examples, the disorderly love of earthly things, which so carries away our heart, as to make it condemn all the delights, and all the treasures of Heaven. And you thereby see, how true JESUS CHRST's Word is, that He, who renounces not the Love of the World, cannot be his Disciple. Love then all things with moderation. *If Riches abound with you*, says the Prophet, *set not your Heart on them*. Put all your hope in GOD, and expect from him, as from a true Father, assistance in all your affairs.

Psal. 62.
v. 10.

Be contented with what he shall have given you.

you, continue peaceably in the state, he has plac'd you in, and desire not to be more, than he will have you be. Those, that depart from this Rule, are deceiv'd, and if they leave it, to follow their irregular desires, they must know, that they shall very hardly obtain, what they seek with so much passion; that, if they find it, it shall not profit them; and, to compleat their unhappiness, they shall fall into many sins, which will make them lose both the Benefits of this Life, and those of Eternity. Wherefore *Salomon* very wisely said: *Lift not up thine Eyes to Riches, which thou canst not obtain: for they will make themselves Wings, as of an Eagle, and fly up to Heaven.* Prov. 23. 5.

§. 9.

The ninth is, to apply ones self to the Reading of good Books, and reject naughty ones, the Reading of them being very pernicious: for the Word of GOD is truly our Light, our Phyick, our Nourishment, and our Guide; 'tis that, which fills our will with good designs; 'tis that, which helps us to recollect our selves, when our heart is most distracted, and awakens Devotion in us, when it is most drowsy; 'tis by that we avoid Idleness, which is the Mother of all Vices; and in fine, as material Nourishment is necessary to preserve the Life of the Body, the Reading of good Books is no less so, to maintain the Life of the Soul. *St. Hierom* says, that the true Food of the Soul is to meditate day and night on the Life of our Lord; and the reason, he gives for it, is, that by this exercise the understanding is fed with the knowledge of the truth, and the will strengthened

strengthened by the savor, it finds in it, and the love, it conceives for it. These two being the principal Wheels of the Clock, on which all in a manner depends, if they go right, all the rest keep equality, and justness in their motions. This is one of the most important effects, wrought by the reading of holy Books: but besides this, there is nothing more useful to shew us our Defects, to heal our Scorples, and to comfort us in the Temptations, that come upon us. 'Tis a Treasure of wise Counsels for our Conduct, it discovers to us the sublime Mysteries, and in fine, encourages us to do well by the Examples of Virtue, it sets before us, and by the abundance of Fruits, which proceed from it. 'Tis for this cause Salomon so much recommends it to us in his Proverbs, when he says: *My Son, keep diligently the Commandments of thy Father, and depart not from the Law of thy Mother. Carry it always on thy Heart, and bind it about thy neck, as a precious Jewel. When thou shalt walk abroad, let it go along with thee, when thou sleepest, let it be thy Guard, and when thou shalt awake, talk with it. For the Commandment of GOD is a Candle, his Law is a Light, and the Chastisement of Discipline is the way to Life.*

Prov. 6. v. 20,
21, 22, 23.

But that you may benefit by your Reading, you must read well: enter not hastily, and without respect into this Exercise, which ought to be holy. Banish from it all Curiosity, read with Humility, and with a purpose to become better. Reading, us'd in this manner, has much resemblance with Meditation: Meditation indeed stays a little longer on things, ruminating and digesting them more at leisure; but in effect, good Reading does almost the same thing, and if you read with the same preparation, as you ought, you will

not

not draw much less profit from the one, than from the other. For the light, which the understanding receives by it, descends immediately into the will, and all the other powers of the soul, as the motion and vertue of the first Heaven is communicated to all the celestial Orbs. Love then the Reading of Holy Books, but prefer Prayer before Reading: read not many things at a time, for fear of tiring your Spirit instead of refreshing it. Receive the Word of GOD with an holy and spiritual Hunger, out of what mouth soever it proceeds, even tho' it be rudely and grossly pronounced; and if it affect you not, humble your selves, accuse rather your own Palat, which is too nice, than the Rudeness of him, who speaks; and be perswaded, that 'tis thro' your own Fault, that you are not found worthy to understand it, and receive it with pleasure.

§. 10.

The tenth is, never to lose GOD's Presence, that is, to behold him always present before your Eyes, as the Witness of your Actions, the Judge of your Life, and your Strength in your Weakness; and to desire of him often by fervent Aspirations, in consideration of these divine Qualities, the Assistance of his Grace, to the end you may never take too much liberty in any thing. In this manner did an holy King walk before GOD, as he teaches us by these words: *Mine Eyes are always fixt upon our Lord, because he will deliver my Feet out of the Snare.* And in another place, *I have set our Lord always before mine eyes: for he is at my right hand, that I may not be moved.*

'Tis

'Tis true, that this continual Attention ought not to regard only G O D ; 'tis fit, that you employ a part of it on your selves, and on the Conduct of your Life. In this manner ought you to make good use of your two Eyes, the one to be often turn'd towards G O D, to give him the Reverence; you ow him, and beg of him his Grace; and the other to consider your own Actions, to the end you may never swerve from your Obedience to his Law. Remember, and be assur'd, that of all the Exercises of Devotion this Attention and Vigilance towards G O D, and your selves, is one of the most certain to keep you to your Duty, and make you pass this Life like *Christians*.

I know, that this is to require much of you, and that 'tis not easy to be always in this actual Attention; but I am oblig'd to tell you, that you ought earnestly to desire it of G O D, and endeavor with all your might to procure it on certain occasions; as when you begin any dangerous Affair, or such, wherein you may be in hazard of offending; as when you leave retirement and silence, to go and discourse about business with persons, whom you know to be of a difficult temper; when you go to take your Food, and especially when you resort to the Quire, to sing Praises to G O D, or to the Altar, to offer up there the holy Sacrifice. 'Tis of exceeding great Importance to prepare your selves well on these occasions, and to foresee with care the dangers, you may fall into, if you behave your selves negligently in them. Imitate the Attention of a Traveller, who meets with a difficult passage in his way; he has then his eye more open than before, he observes all his paces, and all his steps. Do you the like, and be quite otherwise attentive
and

and strengthened with a more powerful and more lively Prayer on these sorts of occasions. Experience shews us, that you will be more sober at Table, and more moderate at your Meals, if you are beforehand prepar'd against the Allurements of Intemperance, than if you had not us'd this Precaution. 'Tis the same with all the other Vices, and by following this Counsel you will avoid abundance of sins. *Ecclesiasticus* teaches us this wise Lesson, when he says: *My Son, provide the Medicine, before the Disease surprize thee*; that is, foresee the Danger, and remedy it, before it befalls thee. *Ecclef. 18: v. 20.*

§. II.

The eleventh Remedy is to fly Idleness, which is the Mother of all Vices. And this is so true, that of four unhappy Causes, related by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, thro' which *Sodom* fell into the greatest and most horrible of all Crimes, he alledges this as one of the principal. 'Twas also a Maxim with the ancient Fathers of the Desert, that a Religious man employ'd has but one only Temptation to fear, but that he, who is idle, has Reason to apprehend very many, because the Devil endeavors to make them all enter into him thro' the Gate of Idleness. There are then two things found in this Vice, which ought to render it infinitely odious to all good people: the one, that it opens the door to all sorts of Evils; and the other, that it shuts it to all manner of Goodness. For since neither Learning, Riches, Honor, Virtue, nor any other good thing can be obtain'd without labor, a man, that shuns pains, throws away, as I may say, the Instrument, with which

he may make himself Master of all these good things. Who will not then abhor a Fault, which draws after it such dangerous consequences? What greater unhappiness can befall a Town, than to have two Gates, of which the one is for the bringing in of all good things, and the other serves as a passage for all evil things; and to have the first always shut, and the second always open? I see nothing, that more lively represents the state of the Damn'd in Hell. In the mean time the Soul of a Sluggard, who is busy'd about nothing, is in this condition; it remains miserably expos'd to all Evil, and totally deprived of all Good, since Good comes only by Labor, and a slothful man flies nothing so much as Labor.

Wherefore, Brethren, in such manner regulate your lives, and so well dispose of your time during the day, that there may be no moment unemploy'd; let poor people, and such, as are of low degree, apply themselves to their Trades, and the work of their hands; but as for those, whom GOD has not caus'd to be born in that condition, I know nothing, that can be sweeter and more beneficial to them, than to employ in the reading of good Books the time, they shall have left, after they have given, what was necessary, to Prayer, and the government of their Household. *Cassian*, speaking of the ancient Monks, says, that those Fathers held the avoiding of Idleness to be so important to the persevering in Vertue, and Religious Observances, that, if any amongst them was so far separated from all worldly Commerce, that he could not carry his work to be sold, they oblig'd him not to labor a jot the less for that; but at the years end he set his works on fire to rid his Cell, and began again a new.

Lib. 10. c. 24.

new, He adds, that this labour no way hindred their Prayer, because at the same time, that their Hands were exercis'd in Action, their Heart discours'd with GOD by Prayer.

§. 12.

We put in the twelfth place Solitude, which is the surest Guardian of Innocence. Nothing so powerfully preserves it; and 'tis this, which all at once cuts off the occasion of all sins, since it banishes from our eyes and our senses all the Objects, which may give them birth. This Remedy is so certain, that Heaven sent no other to the blessed *Arsenius*, when he heard that voice, which said to him: *Arsenius*, fly, keep silence, and be quiet. If you will then become true Servants of GOD, endeavour to retire into your selves: do all, that possibly you can, to free your selves from all Visits, Complements, and worldly Conversations. For what can you hear in Companies, but Detractions, Lies, or Flatteries? or, if they are exempt from these things, that are sins, which rarely happens, they are not from abundance of others, less criminal indeed, yet such, as will render your Souls void of Devotion, and so fill them with the Images and Remembrance of what you shall have seen, and heard, that 'twill never fail to present it self before you at the time of Prayer, and hinder it from being so free and pure, as it ought to be. But if you are lookt on as uncourteous, and if worldly men take it ill, that you pay them not these Civilities, trouble not your selves about it: for 'tis far less inconvenient, that men should complain of you, than that you should

displease your GOD. Cast your Eyes on the Martyrs, and so many other Saints, who have done so great, and suffer'd so terrible things, to obtain Heaven. You labor for the Glory, they enjoy, and little pains or privations will seem light to you, if you compare them with an high Recompence. After all, I invite you to a labor, which is but small; and should you keep any other Conduct, the greatness of the evil, you would receive by it, is so formidable, that I cannot sufficiently express it: for the Corruption of the World is at this day so great, and the Discourses of Men so pernicious, that you can scarce frequent them without extream danger.

§. 13.

In fine for the last and most infallible of all Remedies, you must absolutely break with the World: for 'tis impossible to be joyntly the Friend of GOD and of the World; to please GOD and the World together. The ways, the intentions, the works of the one are wholly opposite to those of the other: *The Bed is strait*, says the Prophet, *it cannot contain two at a time: the Covering is narrow, it cannot suffice for two*, that is, for GOD and the World.

A Servant of GOD must then resolve with himself to renounce the World, and separate himself from it for ever, without troubling himself for what may be said of him. Provided you have not actually given any cause of Scandal, laugh at the World, with all its vain discourses and reproaches: all the noise, it can make, is but Wind, its terrors, and all the occasions, it can take, to make you fear, are but Bugbears to scare little Children, who are afraid of every shadow: and

and to conclude, whoever shall regard the Talk of the World, and concern himself about it, can never be GOD's true Servant. This is, what the great Apostle wisely said: *If I would please men, I Gal. i. v. 10. should not be the Servant of CHRIST.* For every one is Servant to him, whom he desires to please, and whose Will he obeys.

§. 14.

Besides these Counsels and general Remedies, I had to give you, for the strengthening you against the Temptations and Assaults of sin, there are yet three others, which are the most efficacious of all, to wit, the use of the Sacraments, Prayer, and Alms. The Apostle teaches us, that among all the means to prevent our falling into sin there is none so powerful, as Grace; and 'tis by these three sorts of good works, that you may more easily obtain Grace, tho' it be in different manners: for the Sacraments ordinarily give Grace, Prayer begs it, and Alms merit it. Other good works may also render you worthy of it; but the merit is particularly attributed to Alms, because this great Favor, to be found worthy of mercy in the sight of GOD, is a Recompence, which answers the Charity, you shew to your Neighbour. And thus Alms not only serve to satisfy for past sins, but also to keep us from committing of new ones, according to that sentence of Ecclesiasticks: *Alms are as a Purse of Treasure, Ecclef. 29. which the wise man carries about with him: GOD v. 16, 17, 18. will remember it, and preserve its memory, as the Apple of his Eyes: with Alms he shall fight against his Enemies more than with Sword and Lance, and it*

shall be to him, as a Shield against the mighty.

As for the Sacraments, who is ignorant, that GOD has instituted them, as heavenly Medicines against sins? That he left them in his Church, to serve as a Remedy against the sluggishness of the Faithful, to kindle Love, and stir up Devotion in their Hearts, to relieve their Miseries, and be as it were Treasures of Grace? I should have much to say on this subject, if I would extend my discourse on every one of these three things in particular: but because I have already treated of the Sacraments in the second and third Book of this Memorial, and shall speak of Prayer in the fifth, having also said somewhat of Alms, when I explain'd to you the three Parts of Satisfaction, of which Alms is one, I shall insist no longer on them, leaving you to the perusal of those places, to which I refer you. But remember, that the most important of all things for the furthering of you in this way, and what you ought most incessantly to beg of GOD in your Prayers, is, that he will rather abandon you to all other Miseries, and do with you, whatsoever he in the rigor of his Justice shall think fit, than permit you to fall into one mortal sin. To strengthen you in this Resolution, beg earnestly of him three sorts of Love, and three sorts of Hatred: the love of Himself, the love of Sufferings, and the love of Vertue; the hatred of Sin, the hatred of your own Will, and the hatred of your own Flesh, these two last being the most usual Causes of Sin, when they are inordinately lov'd. Let this holy Hatred continually oppugn and destroy these wicked Loves, and let your Actions, the contempt and severe treating of your selves, always accompany your Prayers: for in this consists the

Knot

Knot of so important an Affair. But we shall handle this matter more at large in the end of this Book.

§. 15.

In these seventeen general Remedies against Sin does the greatest part of the *Christian* Philosophy consist. It teaches also many Particulars against every one of the Vices, taken separately; but the brevity, I have prescrib'd my self in this Treatise, suffers me not to speak of them. But to conclude, and finish a last Advice, with which it will be easy for you to keep all the rest, Have always four things before your Eyes, and endeavor with great care to observe them. Chastise your Body, watch over your Tongue, mortify your Desires, and do all you can, never to lose the Presence of G O D. Thus shall you keep in order the four principal parts, of which your Body is compos'd, the Flesh, the Tongue, the Understanding, and the Will. These being regulated, the rest of your Interiors will remain calm, and then you will not easily fall into such Offences, as may put you out of G O D's Favor, which is the principal end, I have propos'd my self in this Treatise.

CHAP. II.

Of the Temptations, that most ordinarily beset those, who begin to serve GOD; principally in Monasteries.

WE are advis'd in *Ecclesiasticus* to have the Medicine ready, before the Disease attacks us, and the principal design in Philosophy has ever been to discover unto them the dangers, to which they are expos'd in the course of this life, and give them directions for avoiding them. According to this Rule, I thought 'twould not be inconvenient, before I finish this matter, to observe to you in few words some sorts of Temptations, to which they, who begin to serve GOD, are subject. 'Tis not a small matter to know, that they are but Temptations: for to know them well is in a manner to have conquer'd them. When the skilful Fowler lays a Snare for the catching any Prey, he so disposes it, that the poor Bird may rather take it for some pleasing Food, than for a Snare: so, when the Devil will tempt any one he uses all his endeavors to perswade him, that 'tis not a Temptation, but some reasonable Motion: and therefore 'twas, I said to you, that 'tis no small advantage towards the vanquishing a Temptation to know, that 'tis a Temptation. In the mean time, Brethren, whoever you are, if you pretend to enter into this new Warfare, prepare for the Fight. Suppose at first, that you shall find in it many difficulties,

ficulties, and that the Temptations of the Enemy will not be wanting. The Wise man gives you warning of it in *Ecclesiasticus*, nor is it without cause, that he says: *My Son, when thou shalt come* Ecclef. 3.
to serve the Lord, live in fear, and prepare thy Soul v. 1.
for Tryal.

The first of these Temptations, and that, which first perplexes the mind of Beginners, is ordinarily against the Faith. The most part of men are so strangely asleep in matters of Faith, that they scarce behold any of them, but like things appearing in a dream: so that at the moment of their awaking out of this deep sleep, when they open their Eyes, and discover such admirable Mysteries, they are like strangers, new come ashore in an unknown Country, they scarce believe, what they see, and their little Knowledge and Light make them hesitate on every thing, that is propos'd to them. They may be also compar'd to a new Apprentice, who, entring into the Shop of a Master, that is full of work, finds it fill'd with all the Instruments of his Trade; he looks on them one after another with amazement, he asks what use they are for; but when he has taken them into his hand, and learnt, how they must be manag'd, then these doubts vanish, and he finds nothing more commodious or better invented, than that, which troubled him, and seem'd strange to him in the beginning.

The second Temptation is that, which is term'd Blasphemy. This represents to the Imagination filthy and abominable Objects, when a man endeavors to enter into the Meditation of heavenly things. This most disturbs such persons, as have but newly quitted a worldly life: for, their minds being yet fill'd with the Images of what is most
ordinarily

ordinarily seen in the World, 'tis difficult so soon to get that away, which time has deeply rooted in them. Thus Representations, altogether carnal and impure, are mixt with the spiritual ones, they would behold, and this mixture gives them an extream torment. The best way to get rid of them, is to slight them, since they are in effect rather shadows, rais'd by the Enemy, to frighten, than real dangers.

The third Temptation proceeds from Scruples; and this is caus'd only by the ignorance of spiritual things, which is usually found in Novices. In this Obscurity they go like those, who walk in the night, fearing to fall at every step; and this particularly befalls them, because they know not the difference between a simple Thought and a Consent. Thus they believe, they consent to every thing, that comes into their mind.

The fourth Temptation is, to be easily scandaliz'd at the seeing in another any thing, contrary to what they have propos'd for themselves: for beginning to open their Eyes, and to know, how happy a thing it is to serve GOD, they wonder, any one should take another course; and cannot behold this disorder without indignation. These persons, Brethren, do not yet understand the greatness of human Frailty. They know not the depths of GOD's Judgments, and are yet very far from the Sentiments of *St. Gregory*, who teaches us, that true Holiness is full of Compassion, and that, which is false or imperfect, easily falls into murmuring.

There is a fifth Temptation, when men take offence at the Laws, and Order, establish'd to regulate the State, of which they make profession, and will set up themselves for Judges, and Censurers,

surers, to decide, whether what their Rule has ordain'd, is good or bad. This is a very great Rashness, into which none ordinarily fall, but proud and presumptuous Spirits, who trust more to their own Wit, than to the Wisdom of their Superiors: and this Temptation has affinity with that of the old Serpent, who question'd our first Parents, saying: *Why has GOD forbidden you to eat of the Fruit of this Tree?* The Wise man on the contrary exhorts us *to hear the Parables*, that is, the Doctrine of the Ancients, and the high sense, they conceal in their Obscurity: they are not without Mystery, tho' we at first perceive it not. A Child, which begins to read, believes, what is told him, without informing himself of any thing; but in fine he understands things by time and exercise. If you desire to profit, suffer your selves to be guided by the Counsel of another, and utterly renounce your own Opinion. Act rather by the way of Faith and Obedience, than by the way of Reason, and say with the Prophet: *I am made like a beast before thee.* If you live not in this manner, you will not continue long in Religion, nor will ever possess Peace in your Heart.

There is another sort of Temptation, which is to be over-eager in desiring spiritual Comforts, to be excessively afflicted, when they are wanting, to think your selves something, when GOD grants you these Favors, and to believe your selves so much the more perfect, the more Consolations you receive. Understand then, that these Tendernesses and these Sweetnesses are not always the most certain measure of Perfection; but that first Charity, and then the Mortification of the Passions, and the progress in solid Vertues are

Gen. 3. v. 1.

Prov. 1. v. 6.

Psal. 72.
v. 21.

are the Marks and Fruits of true Love. There are some also, who are so mistaken, as to seek sensual Comforts, when they want spiritual ones, and this is a greater inconvenience than the first.

There is another Temptation also, befalls these persons, of whom we speak : if GOD visits them by his Grace, and shews them any extraordinary Favor, they cannot keep it secret ; they publish, what they ought to conceal, they will become Preachers and Directors of others before their time, and make themselves Masters, being yet but Scholars. They fall into this fault, thinking to do well, and under an appearance of Virtue, but they ought to know, that the Fruits of a Tree are nothing worth, if they are not produc'd in their season, and that the duty of a Beginner is to put his Finger on his Mouth, and keep his Soul.

Another Temptation, which molests them, and is very common, is the desire to change place. They imagin, they shall be more at quiet, more retir'd, more devout in certain places, and shall profit more in them ; but they perceive not, that by changing of place the Air is indeed chang'd, but not the Heart, and that, whithersoever we go, we always carry our selves with us : that is, we always carry along with us an Heart, corrupted by sin, which is an undrainable Source of Miseries and Troubles, and whose sickness is not cur'd by the change of abode, but by mixing the severity of Mortification with the sweetness of Piety. This indeed truly changes the Heart, and as long as this Odor preserves its sweetness, the Soul perceives not the stinks, that proceed from the infection of our Flesh. Wherefore the best way of flying from our selves is by approaching

ing to G O D, and communicating with him: for if we abide in him by a fervent Devotion, and true Sentiments of Love, we are also out of our selves, and remain separated from our selves.

There is yet another Temptation, when in a new Gust, and thro' the new Fervors, they feel, they give themselves with excess, and without discretion, to extraordinary Watchings, Prayers, Solitude, and Abstinences, not considering, that they thereby spoil their Sight, weaken their Head, destroy their Stomach, and often render themselves unfit for all spiritual Exercises during the remainder of their lives. I know these things by experience, and the least evil, which can happen by them, is to fall thro' these ill-undertaken Austerities into some dangerous Sickness. For it sometimes so falls out, either thro' the good treatment, made to the sick, or for want of continuing the good Exercises, which must of necessity be interrupted in this condition, that Temptations in such sort increase, as to overthrow all Virtue, which is no longer sustain'd by Grace, nor by the strength of Devotion: some, being once accustomed to Conveniences and Ease, imagine, they can no more be without them: and others, as St. Bonaventure says, come thereby passionately to love their own Flesh, and to live not only in delicacy, but also in licentiousness: they make a color of their Infirmities, and pretend thereby to have a Right of giving a free Career to their Senses and Pleasures.

There are also some, who thro' overmuch Precaution fall into another Extremity: they are so fearful of being sick, that they dare attempt nothing, which may give them the least trouble. They say, 'tis sufficient for their salvation, not to offend

offend G O D mortally, without subjecting themselves to the Rigors, or other Practices of Devotion and Penance, which are observ'd by all those, who have embrac'd the strait way. This is a dangerous Temptation, and of these sluggards does St. Bernard speak, when he says; *A Beginner, who, being as yet sensual, pretends to Discretion, and being but a Novice, thinks himself much advanc'd, and being but newly enter'd into the Spiritual Life, meddles in giving Counsels, runs the hazard of continuing no long time in Religion.*

In fine the last and most common of all Temptations is to leave the good way, they have taken, and return into the World. The Devil uses a thousand sorts of Artifices, to engage those in it afresh, who have separated themselves from it. Sometimes to flatter their Incontinence, he represents to them Marriage as an assured Haven, and the sweetest and easiest of all sorts of life, tho' it is in truth most frequently nothing but a Sea, always agitated with Tempests; and to confirm them by great Examples, he sets before them the ancient Patriarchs, who were at the same time Saints and marry'd: sometimes he persuades them, they shall meet with a Woman, entirely conformable to their Humor, and Intention, and that so they shall bring up their Children in the fear of G O D, and that increasing their Estates by some rich Alliance, they may therewith relieve the Poor, which Religious Persons not being able to do, they thereby lose an excellent means of securing to themselves the Kingdom of Heaven at the day of Judgment. Sometimes he deceives them under the pretence of an higher Perfection; he suggests to them the desire of a stricter Order, as is that of the *Carthusians*; and they see not, that

that he only lays this Bait, to get them out of the Enclosure of their Monastery, and to exercise on them his Power with more liberty, after they shall have broken thro' this Restraint, and return'd into the World. Sometimes he excites in their Hearts a vehement love of Solitude, making them desirous to imitate the retir'd lives of the ancient Hermits; but this irregular desire, which he insinuates to them, is only to destroy them by this desert and solitary way, after they are separated from the company of their Spiritual Fathers, and depriv'd of the assistance, and light of their Counsels.

For amongst all these sorts of Temptations the most dangerous are those, which allure us under the Image of Piety. Things that are openly evil, carry a deformity with them, which makes them known, and gives an horror of them at the very first; those on the contrary, which have some appearance of Good, or some false Character of Vertue, are much more to be fear'd. Wherefore the Devil more frequently makes use of them against GOD's Servants; and knowing, that they are resoly'd to do good, and eschew evil, he employs all his Malice and all his Power, to make them swallow this Poison, that is, Sin, mixt with the sweetness of a false Zeal, or an indiscreet Devotion.

The Enemies of *Daniel*, having in vain attempted all sorts of means to bring him into disfavor with the King of *Persia* for committing some fault against the Laws of his Empire, and not being able to render him guilty on that side, took occasion from the observation of GOD's Law to ruin him: which succeeded not with them, because GOD protected his Servant. The Devil ordinarily tempts well-given Persons in the same

Dan. 6. per totum.

same manner, and this way does he lay his snares for them; and for this reason ought they to walk with very great discretion and circumspection, even in the love of things, which appear good and vertuous: for tho' it is not a sin to have an affection for good things; there will perhaps be one in the over-vehement manner of our desiring them. All heat, that is violent, ought to be suspected by you; and excess is always dangerous in all things.

These are the most ordinary Temptations of such, as begin to serve GOD. I have set down some, which can befall none but religious persons; others are common to them with those, that live in the World; but they have all Remedies fit both for the one and for the other. The principal are Humility, Submission, Prayer, Confession, and particularly the Choice of a Confessor, who has Prudence joyn'd with Holiness: for to him, as to a good Pilot, does it belong to guide this Vessel with judgment amidst the raging Sea of this World, where the Devils every moment raise such horrible Tempests. But the most certain Remedy of all, dear Brethren, is to put your Confidence in GOD, and invoke his Assistance. 'Tis he, who knows our Weakness, and supports us by his Grace; 'tis he, who at our coming forth of *Egypt* draws us off from the Land of the *Philistines*, that we may escape their Assaults, and not be forc'd to undergo a cruel War together with the Fatigues of a long Journey: and 'tis he in fine, who, as the Apostle speaks, *will not suffer us to be tempted beyond what we are able*, but will increase his Graces, when he shall see us in greatest danger. And to conclude this Point, the true Remedies against Temptations

1 Cor. 10.
v. 13.

stations are the same, we have before declar'd to you against sin: for there can be no better Arms against what inclines to sin, than those, which must be employ'd against sin it self. And this shall suffice for the first Rule, or first Instruction to those, who begin to serve GOD.

C H A P. III.

The second Rule of a Christian Life, which is the Imitation of JESUS CHRIST, for Persons more advanc'd in Vertue.

SINCE there are some Persons, who, not content with doing all, they believe necessary for their salvation, desire to pass further, and perfect themselves in Piety by the practice of the sublimest Vertues, 'tis fit they should be assisted: The Doctrine, I am now going to teach them, will be of use towards the accomplishing them in so noble a Design, besides what I shall farther declare to them in the seventh Book of this Memorial.

And because all things have an end, to which they ought to be directed, having in the former Rule set down one end, which was the hatred and avoiding of mortal sin, we shall in this propose a more excellent one, which shall be the Imitation of JESUS CHRIST, to which every *Christian* ought to direct his whole Life. I shall be oblig'd to repeat to you here some things, I have touch'd in the foregoing Chapters; but fear not therefore, you shall lose your time in perusing them: for I

Y

declar'd

declar'd them to you at first as means, serving to
eschew sin, which was then my principal aim;
but here I shall represent them to you for other
ends, wherefore I will treat of them in a particu-
lar manner.

§. I.

I shall then set before you, as the first of the
Precepts, I am to give you, and as the end of the
Doctrine, I desire to engrave in your hearts, these
words of our Saviour: *I have given you an Exam-
ple, that, as I have done, so you ought to do.* For as
a good Writing-Master, desiring to render his
Scholars accomplit in their Art, sets before them
Copies of the fairest and curiousest Letter that
can be found, to the end they may frame their
hand to something, like it: so I, desiring to give
you the Form of an holy and *Christian* Life, have
thought it necessary to go at first to the Original,
and represent to you JESUS CHRIST himself,
since he was the Master of Vertues, and that all
the things, he said and did, during his Life, were
Examples as well as Remedies for ours. Every
one knows, that Effects are so much the more
perfect, as they approach nearer to the Perfection
of their Causes, and do more resemble them.
As the Perfection of a Scholar consists in imita-
ting his Master: so all the Perfection of the
Creature is to imitate its Creator, and render it
self as like to him, as it possibly can. Tho' this
cannot be attain'd to, it must be aspir'd after,
and 'tis not without cause, that our Lord in so
many places of holy Scripture invites us to so ex-
cellent an Imitation. *Be holy,* says he in one
place,

Joh 13. v. 15.

Levit. 11.
v. 14.

place, *as I am holy.* And in another, *Be ye merciful, as your Father is merciful.* And elsewhere, *Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Luk. 6. v. 36.

Mat. 5. v. 48.

Since then all the Perfection of a Creature consists in imitating its Creator, since to imitate a thing, it must first be seen, and since none can see GOD, during this life, in his Nature and Glory, the Son of GOD was so exceeding gracious, that he vouchsaf'd to cloth himself with our Flesh, to the end that being made like other men, we might see him, whom we ought to imitate. He took the form of a Servant, that we might see, in what manner he convers'd with Men on Earth, what were his words, to what works he apply'd himself, how he behav'd himself in the good or evil success of such things, as beset him, in Solitude, or in Company, with his Friends and with his Enemies, with the Great and with the Small; and in fine that we might see the excellency of his Vertues, his Charity, his Humility, his Patience, his Obedience, his Sweetness, his Fastings, his Prayers, his Tears, his Watchings, his Preachings, his Labors, his Zeal for the Salvation of Souls, his Love for his Neighbor, his Rigor and Severity towards himself, his Tenderness and Condescension to others. This was one of the principal causes, which made him come into the World; GOD was pleas'd to make himself Man, that Man might become a GOD, that he might learn to live as GOD, not only for having heard of GOD, but for having seen him; not only thro' the Force of GOD's Word, but thro' the Efficacy of his Examples. And this is, what a great Prophet had several Ages before declar'd, when he said; *Thy Eyes shall see thy Master, and thy Ears shall hear the Voice of him; that shall admit*

Isa. 30. v. 20.

21.

nish behind thy back, saying: *This is the Way, walk in it, and turn not aside either to the right hand, or to the left.* For by the manifestation of this great Mystery our Ears have not only heard the Doctrine of GOD, but our Eyes have also seen his Person; that is, they have seen the Word in Flesh, GOD in Man, to the end Man might learn of him, how he ought to be the Imitator of GOD, and that Man might not despair of being able to make himself GOD, since he saw that GOD had made himself Man. Thus the greater Conformity you shall have with JESUS CHRIST in all these Vertues, the perfecter you will be. This is, what the Spirit of GOD, who resides in the Just, pretends to effect. And (to use the words of a great Doctor) *there is no Painter, who takes so much care to make a Picture perfectly resemble its Original, as Almighty GOD does to render all his Elect like to JESUS CHRIST crucify'd: knowing it to be the greatest Perfection, and the highest Glory, that can in this Life be acquir'd.*

But you will perhaps say to me: How can I imitate the Son of GOD? I am Man, and he is GOD: I am an Abyſs of Miſery, and he is an Abyſs of Vertue: how can I raiſe my ſelf to the imitation of ſo wonderful a Purity? Your doubt is reaſonable, and indeed a mortal and frail man cannot of himſelf attain to ſo high a Reſemblance; but he may approach it by the Power of GOD's Spirit, when he is pleas'd to dwell in him. 'Tis for the producing ſo admirable an Effect, that this Spirit was given to Men; 'tis by the vertue of this divine Spirit, that they may lead a divine life, doing the works, not of Men, but of GOD; ſince they have the Spirit of GOD. 'Twould not be unpoſſible for a man to ſpeak like Cicero,
if

if he had the same Spirit with *Cicero*; nor for another to dispute like *Aristotle*; if he had the Spirit of *Aristotle*: Thus 'tis not impossible for a man to imitate the Vertues of *GOD*, when he has receiv'd the Spirit of *GOD*. 'Tis no very new Change, to see things participate the nature of those, with which they are joyn'd. Insipid Food, season'd with Salt, will become savoury; preserv'd with Sugar, sweet; and dress'd with Perfumes and Spices, odoriferous: 'tis in like manner less extraordinary for Man to become divine, if he partakes of the divine Spirit. Our Lord explain'd both the one and the other in few words, when he said: *That, which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh; and that, which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit*: By which he plainly declar'd to us, that 'twas not possible, the Flesh should of it self be any thing but Flesh; but that 'twas not also impossible, it should become Spirit, if it were assisted by the vertue and presence of the divine Spirit.

Joh. 3. v. 6.

'Tis from the influence of this Spirit, as from an heavenly Seed, that the Children of *GOD* are born; and 'tis not therefore to be wondred, if, as Children, they resemble their Father, and lead a divine life, since they have receiv'd the divine Spirit, as one of the dearest amongst these Children teaches us in the following words: *We, having the Vail taken off from our Face, and receiving in our Souls, as in a Glass, the Brightness of GOD, are transformed into the same Image of GOD thro' the operation of his Spirit*. Nor are we much to be surpriz'd, if they are in their degree stil'd Gods, as *David* nam'd them, when he said: *I have said, that ye are Gods, and ye are all the Sons of the Higbest*: since 'tis not so much to be made

2 Cor. 3
v. ult.

Psal. 81. v. 6.

Partakers of GOD's Name, as 'tis to be Partakers of his Spirit and Likeness.

And indeed, ought any one to be astonish'd at Mans being rais'd to this Dignity, since 'tis a Grace, bestow'd on us by the Son of GOD, who came down from Heaven, to give it to us? He vouchsaf'd so far to humble himself, as to become Man, to the end that Man, who was wholly corrupted, might become GOD, not by Nature, but by Grace. Thus he would in one respect be the exemplary Cause of all our Perfection, since he represented to us in his own most holy Life the Image of a perfect Life; and in another he would be the meritorious Cause of it, since 'twas he, who by the Mystery of his Incarnation, and the Sacrifice of the Cross, obtain'd for us so sublime a state.

Receive then, and preserve faithfully in your Hearts this first Precept for the Conduct of your Life, and regard it, as the End, it ought to have. To this does the Apostle St Peter invite you, when he says: *CHRIST has suffred for us, leaving you an Example, that ye should follow his steps: who never sinned, neither was there any Guile found in his Mouth: who, when he was revild, revild not again, and, when he suffred wrong, did not threaten.* St. John requires of you the same thing in these words: *He, that saith, he abideth in JESUS CHRIST, ought even so to walk, as he hath walked.* And St. Prosper, explaining this passage, adds: *What is it to live, as JESUS CHRIST liv'd? 'Tis to condemn all, that is pleasing in the World, as JESUS CHRIST condemn'd it; 'Tis not to fear the harshest and most rigorous usage, which he voluntarily suffer'd; 'Tis to teach, what he taught; 'tis to expect, what he promis'd; 'tis to do good even to the most ungrateful;*

Pet. 2.
v. 21, 22, 23.

3 Joh. 2. v. 6.

ful; 'tis not to render Evil for Evil to those, that speak reproachfully of us; 'tis to pray for our Enemies; 'tis to have compassion on the Wicked; 'tis to gain the good will of those, that are against us; 'tis to suffer the Proud with patience; and in fine (as the Apostle says) 'tis to dy to the Flesh, and to live to GOD alone.

The Imitation of JESUS CHRIST comprehends all these things, and many others with them. But because this Precept is general, 'tis requisit, I now treat of Vertues in particular, and explain to you the Use and Practice of them according to my Promise.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Exercise and Use of Vertues.

THE first of all the Vertues, and which is like the Tree of Life, planted in the midst of Paradise, is Charity, which makes us love GOD above all things, with all our Heart, with all our Soul, and with all our Strength. This is the first, and the greatest of all the Commandments. Charity is the Queen of all Vertues; the Beginning and End of the whole Christian Life; 'tis the Life and Soul of all our Actions, without which neither Faith, Hope, the Gift of Prophecy, Martyrdom it self, nor all the other Vertues do any thing avail us. For the obtaining this divine Vertue you principally stand in need of three things: the first is, to keep your Souls free from Passions, and from all the sins,

Mat. 22.
v. 38.

1 Cor. 13.
per totum.

Wisd. l. v. 8.

they are wont to produce: for the *divine Wisdom* (as the holy Scripture says) *will not enter into an evil Conscience, nor will she make her abode in a heart subject to sin*: Wherefore all those, who design to love Almighty GOD, continually endeavor to abstain not only from mortal sins, but from venial ones also, as much as possibly they can. For as a Looking-glass receives the Rays of the Sun with so much the more brightness, as it is it self more bright and clean: so a Soul does so much the more participate the splendors of the divine Love, as it is it self more pure and free from the stains of sin.

The second is to shun vain Conversations, to recollect your selves, as often, as you can, within your selves, and seriously to revolve in your minds all such things, as may stir up your Hearts to love Almighty GOD: For by this Exercise you will know, that all the Causes of Love, we meet with in all Creatures, are to be found in GOD alone, and all of them in the highest Perfection. The Philosophers say, that Good is naturally amiable, and that every one loves his own Good. Now according to these Maxims, which are true, these two things do (besides many others) principally oblige you sovereignly to love Almighty GOD: The Excellency of his Perfections, and the Greatness of his Benefits. We shall in another place treat more largely of these two Obligations. Add to these two Motives the excessive love, he has for you, and that, which you ow to him: since he is your Father, your Brother, your King, your Master, your GOD, and your last End. He is for this reason call'd the Bridegroom of your Souls, and he for this cause deserves to be lov'd with an infinit love, forasmuch as the love

love of the last End is of that nature. The farther you shall enter into the consideration of these things, and the more time you shall employ in them, the more amiable will this divine Object appear to you. I cannot therefore, Brethren, sufficiently conjure you to meditate of it, if you desire to make any great Progress in this Love.

The third, and most expeditious mean is, to beg it earnestly of Almighty G O D. If you find, that your Soul, toucht with the sweetness of our Lord, sighs after this extream Beauty, instantly beseech his Majesty, that he will grant you this precious Treasure, which he alone is able to give you. This way is often found the easiest, and the shortest, and a fervent Prayer frequently gains that in a moment, which a long course of Considerations cannot obtain. 'Tis good to meditate, 'tis better to pray. Ask therefore continually this precious Jewel; beg it earnestly, and let the voice of your Heart cry louder than that of your Body. Chuse in the Scripture, or in the Writings of the Fathers, some Words, full of tenderness, to express the Fervor of your desires. But we shall speak of this Vertue, and all, that concerns it, in the Treatise of the Love of GOD. Moreover, assure your selves, that not one of these words, nor one of your Groans shall be unprofitable. Our Lord is gracious, and his liberality has no limits: In consideration of your Prayer, if it be humble and sincere, he will grant you either some increase of Devotion, or some new Light, or some new Flame of Love; he will augment his Grace in you, he will draw your Heart more effectually to him: he will comfort you with greater Sweetness, or will strengthen you more in the good Course you have begun. Take heed

heed then not to lose by your Negligence so much Good, which you may every moment acquire.

Above all, if you desire to make any progress in Charity, keep your Heart right. In all the works, you shall do, purify first your intention, never seek in them your Interest, your Honor, or your Content: but only the good pleasure and will of GOD. Be careful in all, that you undertake, whether of your self, or by the orders of another, never to do any thing, either because decency requires it, or to satisfy the Ceremonies of the World, or because Necessity obliges you, or Force constrains you to it, or to please the Eyes of Men, or for any other human Interest; but purely to please GOD, and content him: As a vertuous Wife serves her Husband, not for the advantages, she may expect from him, but thro' the sole Affection, she bears him. Your Soul ought to be so chaste and faithful in this point, that, as this Wife adorns, and trims her self, only to satisfy her Husband, and not to please the Eyes of others: so you should desire the Ornaments of Vertues, only to render yourselves acceptable in the sight of Almighty GOD. I speak not this, as if it were blameable to do good Works for the obtaining eternal Life, and to look on it as a Recompence, such an intention being on the contrary holy and commendable; but I only give you to understand, that your Actions will always have so much the more Perfection and Merit, as you shall more separate them from all manner of Interest, and more purely design to do them for the love of GOD. For, as St. Bernard admirably says: *Perfect Love is neither made stronger by Hope, nor becomes weaker, when it expects nothing: for it acts not on consideration of the*

the Benefit, it may receive, nor would ever cease to act, tho' it should lose all hope of acknowledgement. 'Tis Love alone, and not Interest, which moves it to labor.

But 'tis not enough, Brethren, to have this holy Intention in the beginning and end of your Actions, you ought actually to preserve it in the very moment, you are doing them. You ought in such manner to do them, as to offer them at the same time, you do them, and in the very same instant to love GOD effectively, and by a formed Act: When you work, shew, that you are more in Prayer and Love, than in the Work. Thus shall you never be distracted, in what you do, and you shall imitate the practice of the Saints, who amidst apparent labors and distractions were never separated from GOD. The Garments of the Spouse, according to the words of the Canticle, *smelt of Incense*. This is a Figure, in which the Holy Ghost would by Garments signify the Vertues, Souls are cloath'd with; and by Incense, which, being cast into the Fire, sends up an agreeable Perfume even into the highest Region of the Air, the Force of Prayer, which, being made on Earth, ceases not to penetrate even the Heavens. When a Mother thro' excess of Goodness washes the Feet of her Son, or a Wife those of her Husband, who is return'd from a Journey, both the one and the other loves them, and serves them at the same time, and the Heart both of the one and the other is fill'd with Joy in doing service to persons, whom they so dearly love. This is the disposition, your Hearts ought to be in, when you do any thing for the service of your Creator; and thus your Garments will send forth before his Face an Odor of Sweetness.

What

Cant. 4. v. 11

Luk. 21.
v. 3, 4.

What you shall thus do, will be of great merit: for the value of our Actions depends principally on the purity of the Intention, with which we do them. In Money the bulk is not so much esteem'd, as the Metal, a little Gold is worth more than abundance of Copper: so in good Works, the Number is not so considerable, as the Devotion and Love, which accompanies them: as appears by the poor Widows Mite, which our Lord more esteem'd, than the great Offerings of several rich men. It sometimes happens, that a good Action is done with so good a Will, and with so much Charity and Devotion, that 'tis greater in the sight of G O D than many others, which are done in the same manner. As one only Prayer, made with simplicity and fervor, is more acceptable to Almighty G O D, than many others, that are weak and cold: so one only Action, done with zeal and devotion, obtains more, than many others, which want that Fire. This is, what they ought to observe, who live in a state, which obliges them to be always employ'd in good works: Take heed, whoever you are, in what manner you do them, let not their number puff you up: but look, whether you do them, as you ought, that is, with great Devotion and Charity.

Since this divine Vertue has two Branches, the love of G O D, and the love of our Neighbor; endeavor as well to satisfy this second Obligation, as the first, and never cease to love your Brethren for the love of G O D. Charity not only requires us to love G O D, but will also have us love, what belongs to him. Now amongst the things, that are his, nothing is more so, than reasonable Creatures, which he has made after his
own

own Image, and redeem'd with his own Bloud; and thence it comes, that from the same root and the same habit, whence the Love of GOD proceeds, springs also that noble Instinct, which makes us love our Neighbor for G G D's sake: This is the End, for which we ought to love our Neighbor, and this is also the great Motive, by which we are oblig'd to love him, how unworthy soever he may be of our Love. We ought not to love him for himself, but for the sake of our common Lord, who has created him, redeem'd him, and commanded us to love him for his sake: for tho' we may possibly sometimes not find in our Neighbor any cause to love him; yet there are many in GOD, by which he deserves, that we should for his sake not only love our Neighbor, but even all the Pains and Torments in the World. So that, if we see not any subject of Love in the Creature, we shall find in GOD an infinit number of Reasons, both to love him, and to do much more for him.

As to the Effects, this Love requires, that we do injury to no man, that we speak ill of no man, that we judge rashly of no man, that we keep an extraordinary secrecy in what concerns our Neighbor, and that we rather condemn our mouth to an eternal silence, than suffer it to utter the least word, which may any way prejudice his Reputation. Nor is it enough, that we do ill to none, but we must moreover do good to all, assist every one, give good Counsel to all such, as stand in need of it; pardon those, who have offended us; beg pardon of those, whom we have offended; and above all patiently suffer the Humors, Defects, and even the Injuries, we receive of our Brethren, according to the Precept of the
Apostle:

Gal. 5. v. 2.

Apostle: *Bear ye one anothers Burdens, and so ye shall fulfil the Law of CHRIST.* This is, what Charity requires, in which consists the Law and the Prophets. For to go about the founding of a Religion without it, is to think of framing a lively and active Body without a Soul, which is absolutely impossible.

§. I.

Tho Hope was no more in JESUS CHRIST, than Faith, because JESUS CHRIST possess something greater; 'tis nevertheless a Vertue, you ought highly to cherish, as being the Sister of Charity. 'Tis this, which makes you regard GOD, as your Father, and gives you for him the Heart of a Child: for in effect, as there is no good on Earth, which, being compar'd to GOD, deserves the name of good: so there is no Father in this World, which has for his Children Bowels of so much Tenderness and Charity, as this heavenly Father shews to those, whom he has condescended to chuse for his. Assure your selves, that all things, whether good or bad, prosperous or adverse, which befall you in this World, are for your good: since the least Bird falls not into the Net, but by GOD's providence; discover to him your Troubles; and grounding all your Assurance on his Liberality, which is immense, on his Promises, which are faithful, on the Benefits, you have receiv'd of him, which are so many Pledges of his Bounty, and particularly on the Merits of his Son, which he has made ours, hope firmly, that he will have compassion on you, tho you are sinners and miserable, that he will
power-

powerfully assist you by ways, which are unknown to you, and at the hour, you least think of, and that he will turn all things to good for you. And to render your selves worthy of his Favors, have always in your mind, and often in your mouth, these words of *David*: *I am poor, and in want: but our Lord is careful for me.* Psal. 39. v. ult.

The whole Scripture, the Psalms, the Prophets, and the Gospels speak of nothing so often, as of this divine Providence, and how we ought to put all our hope in it. Exercise your selves in this Vertue, and you will see, that your Heart will find it self thereby insensibly strengthened, not only to suffer, but also to expect your Salvation from the Afflictions, and Troubles, it shall please GOD to send you. Be assur'd, that, till you have obtain'd this Confidence, you shall never enjoy true peace and quiet of mind. Without it all things will afflict you, and cast you into Vexation and Trouble; but with it nothing ought to disquiet you, since you have GOD on your side, and his Promises put you in assurance.

§. 2.

Humility, as well inward as outward, ought also to be plac'd in the rank of principal Vertues, since 'tis the Root and Foundation of all the rest. This Vertue was so dear to the Son of GOD, and was so conspicuous both in his Person, and whole Life, that designing to give us a perfect Model for ours, he comprehends all in these words: *Learn of me, for I am meek and humble in heart.* Mat. 23. ult. Which made Cardinal Cajetan say, that the principal part of the Christian Philosophy consists

sists in these two Dispositions: for Humility disposes our Souls to receive the Gifts of G O D, and Meekness teaches us to converse charitably with men.

True Humility causes a Man to regard himself as one of the vilest and most abject Creatures in the World, unworthy of the Bread, he eats, of the Earth, he treads under his feet, and of the Air, he breaths; it makes him esteem himself no other wise, than an abominable Carcase, full of Worms, the stench whereof as himself cannot endure, so it renders him intolerable to every one else. In this manner speaks Blessed Vincent Perrier: *My dear Brethren, says this Saint, we ought both you and I to have this Opinion of our selves, and I more than any one ought to have it: for my Life is nothing but stench and filth, my Works are abominable, and altogether polluted with the corruption of my sins: and what is more deplorable, I daily feel, that this corruption and this stink is renew'd in me.* This Condition, which strikes an horror in the Eyes of Men, ought to cover you with an extream Confusion: since it appears more clearly to the Eyes of G O D, whose sight is far more penetrating. Imagin, that you are already brought to this last and terrible Judgment, have a sincere sorrow for your sins, be sensibly afflicted for having lost the Grace, which you receiv'd, when you were wash'd with the Water of Baptism. As you perceive, that you are wholly putrify'd and stinking in the sight of G O D, be also perswaded, that you are no less so before Angels, and Men: and thus continue in their presence full of Confusion, and Contempt of your selves. Think seriously, on what this most excellent Majesty deserves; consider, how highly you are indebted

to

Tract. de
vitiis spiri-
tualibus.

to him for so many Favors, as you have receiv'd from him, how ill you have answer'd both the one and the other; how instead of the Obedience, you ow him, you have paid him only Disobediences; and you will see, that you have deserv'd, all Creatures should rise up against you, and unite all their Forces to destroy you, to the end they may revenge on you the Injuries, you have insolently done to their Lord. For this reason desire to be despis'd, and to be esteem'd by every one the very dregs of Mankind; Receive patiently, and with joy, all the shame, infamy, and Injuries, that may befall you: let them give you as much pleasure, as a person, animated with wrath, receives, when he is reveng'd on his Enemy: since you ought to look on your selves as such, and 'tis but just, you should revenge on your selves the Offence, you have committed against your GOD.

Another Condition of true Humillity is, that it ought to fill you with a great distrust of your selves, of your own wit, and of your own strength; that it ought to turn you wholly towards JESUS CHRIST, and put you into his arms, whom you must consider as poor, dishonor'd, contemn'd, and dead for you by the Torment of the Cross; till it has in fine brought you to this point, that you do for his sake become as it were dead to all the Pains, and Affronts, which may fall on you. Nor is it sufficient to be in these Sentiments, as to the preparation of the Heart: the outward Man, if it is well prepar'd, must be correspondent to the inward, and as you already by thought and mind put your selves in the lowest place of the World: so you ought in Imitation of JESUS CHRIST reduce your selves

Z

to

Ecclef. 14.
v. 26.

to wash the feet of all men: Your Deportment, your Apparel, your Words, your Table, the Service of your House, and every thing else, (keeping nevertheless the Laws of Discretion) must be conformable to the Humility, you have in your Interior: for 'twould not only be a new Monster, to see a man divided and different from himself, but 'twould also be directly opposit to our Lords Command, who says: *Thou shalt not take a Form, contrary to thine own Form*: so that such dissimulation would wound your Soul.

§. 3.

Chastity, which, as our Saviour affirms, is properly the virtue of Angels, has nothing to fear, when it is accompany'd with Humility. I say, that it has nothing to fear with this faithful Companion: because, one of these Vertues failing, the other runs the danger of being lost. St. *Anselm* therefore spake divinely, when he said, that, *If Pride is not strong enough to ruin Humility, Impurity brings in aid to destroy it; and if the fleshy desires of the Flesh are too weak to vanquish Chastity, Pride lends an hand to overthrow it*: So that these two Vertues have two Vices to conquer; whereas other Vertues have but one. Temperance for example is oppos'd to Gluttony, and Diligence is an Enemy to Sloth; but Humility and Chastity have always Pride and Impurity to struggle with both together: for tho' Pride is a Worm, which by little and little undermines and corrodes all Vertues, it nevertheless particularly attacks this: and consequently, if you desire to be truly chaste, and securely to preserve your Purity, love Humility.

This

This Vertue requires of you almost the Heart of an Angel ; it will have you fly all Visits, Conversations, and Friendships, that may be any way prejudicial to it, even sometimes those of spiritual Persons : for, as *St. Thomas* excellently well says, Spiritual Love is often chang'd into Carnal Love because of the Resemblance there is between the one and the other. It requires, that, as soon as an ill thought shall have entred into your Heart, you reject it with as much speed, as you would do a Coal of Fire, that should have fallen on your hand. It requires, that you employ all your endeavors to be so chaste, and so faithful to GOD in this point, that you live, as if you were without Eyes, not to see any thing, which may offend him, who has given you them. And if you are oblig'd to behold any thing, then say mildly in your Heart : O Lord, I renounce my Eyes, if they dare stay on any thing, which may displease thee : suffer me not to abuse these Eyes, which thou hast created, and which thou now illuminatest with thy light, to the end I may see and admire thy works, in making them weapons of offence against thee. Keeping this Reservedness and this Honesty in your Looks, be assur'd, that Almighty GOD will protect you : that you shall avoid many dangers, and live in great peace. 'Tis also a part of Chastity to gain this important point, that your Heart be only GOD's, and that it be soty'd and bound to him, that no Creature can possess it. See, that it be truly dead to the World, and as if it were deaf and blind, let it neither desire to see, or hear any thing, but what is necessary, or advantageous to your salvation. Nor is it enough to have the Body and Heart chaste, your Eyes, your Words,

your Conversations, your Clothes, your Table, and all the rest of your Life must breath forth nothing but Chastity: for when this Vertue is perfect, it makes all things chaste and innocent; and if any one thing should not be so, it might sometimes be capable to ruin all.

§. 4.

Temperance in eating and drinking is of all the Vertues that, which most upholds Chastity: for, as St. *John Climacus* says, to desire to be chaste, and at the same time to pamper ones Body with delights, is to do like him, that should pretend to drive away a Dog by offering him a piece of Bread.

If you pretend then to any part in this Vertue, you ought to be exceeding careful, not to overcharge your stomach either with Wine or Mear, for fear your Spirit be oppress'd by it. Use both the one and the other with moderation, and at your Meals think much less on the Pleasure, than on the Necessity. 'Tis natural to find a Relish in what one eats, but seek it not, neither stay in it with delight: Dip spiritually with your mind in the most precious Bloud of our Redeemer every bit, you shall put into your mouth: and receive all, that you shall drink, as from the living Fountains of his sacred Wounds: chuse rather common and gross Meats, than such, as are dear, and delicate, remembring, that our Lord tasted Gall and Vinegar for you. But tho' you satisfy your self only with common Food, yet, if you eat it with too much greediness, you lose all the Reward of Abstinence, which consists not so much in the quality

quality of what is eaten, as in the manner of using it. *St. Augustin* teaches us, that 'tis not impossible for a wise man to preserve Temperance amidst the daintiest Dishes, and for an intemperate man to lose it at a Repast, where there is nothing but Herbs: since Gluttony regards not the things, that are eaten, but the disorder, and excess, with which they are taken. In fine, if you are true Lovers of the Spiritual Life, you will declare a perpetual War against Sensuality, refusing it with discretion, whatsoever it passionately desires. In which nevertheless you ought to take heed, so to chastise your Flesh, that you ruin not your Complexion, and your Health by indiscreet Abstinences. Trust not your selves in this matter: keep in it, as in all things else, necessary moderation, and suffer your selves to be guided by the Counsels of the Wise. This Virtue extends yet farther: since it requires, that you avoid superfluity in your Apparel, in your Train, in your Houses, in your Furniture, and in every thing else, of which you are wont to make use.

§. 5.

I exhort you also to love Silence, which has a very strict connexion with Temperance: 'Tis call'd the Mother of Innocence, the Key of Discretion, the faithful Companion of Chastity, the sure Guard of Devotion, and the Ornament of Youth. To exercise you profitably in it, never permit any word to proceed out of your mouth, which may either prejudice your Neighbors Reputation, or be suspected of the least Uncleaness. Never give ear to any, that speak them;

but on the contrary employ all the Prudence, GOD shall have given you, to break off such discourses. Let your Speech be always free from flattery, when you speak of others; and from vanity, when you talk of your selves. Avoid being crabbed in your Language, endeavoring on the contrary to give it all the sweetness and affability, you can. Particularly shun Artifice, and let your discourses be simple and sincere, as those of JESUS CHRIST's true Children ought to be. Never utter any idle words; because 'twould be to make an ill use of your time: but especially abstain from such, as savor of Raillery, because there is nothing, that more hinders Devotion. But the two most dangerous Rocks, you are oblig'd to fear, are the speaking well of your selves, and ill of your Neighbor. The better to secure your selves from all these dangers, speak little; if you can be silent without prejudicing Charity, or Obedience, willingly hold your peace; let not your silence nevertheless be burdensom or of ill edification to any one; and when you shall be oblig'd to speak, be as brief, as possibly you can; speak with circumspection, and before you open your mouth, resolve within your self, to say nothing, but what shall be absolutely necessary. Do not easily engage your self to contradict the Sentiments of another, nor be obstinate against any one; but after you have twice or thrice asserted, what you hold for true, if you are not believ'd, leave others to think, what they please, and continue silent; unless your silence be manifestly prejudicial to GOD's Glory. Take heed of appearing too much wedded to your own Opinions; meddle not with unpleasing Disputes in your Conversations; insist not over earnestly,
and

and with too much heat, even on things, you know; but say simply, and modestly, I think, 'tis so; or 'tis so, if I am not mistaken. Not to deceive your selves in this matter, which is so ordinary, and so important, and, as the Grammarians say, not to commit any Barbarism in this spiritual Language; when you desire to speak, consider seven things, or seven circumstances. The first is the Matter, of which you will speak, which ought to be of things, good, profitable, or necessary, rejecting such, as are evil, unprofitable, and dangerous. The second is the End, for which you shall speak, which ought to be free from dissimulation, interest, and vanity; but full of simplicity and freedom, having an honest and solid Aim. The third is the Manner, how you shall utter your words: speak without being over-much mov'd, without making too much noise, and also without affecting a certain negligence, and delicacy, which belongs only to women; but after a fashion, temper'd with mildness and gravity: neither let your discourse be heavy and unpleasant, but agreeable, and sweet, as they say, *St. Basil's* Talk was. Women particularly should take care to speak without affectation and very simply, and their Language ought to resemble Water, which is then said to be best, when it has no taste at all. 'Tis also a great defect to desire to appear always eloquent, and so make study'd discourses: this is a great vice in men, and a dangerous thing in women. The fourth regards the Person, who speaks: for 'tis not lawful for young people to speak with so much liberty. Silence is a great Ornament of that Age, and shews a Reservedness and Shamefastness, which very much become it, especially in Maidens; according to

that wise Remonstrance, which St. Ambrose addresses to them: *Let Virgins look to themselves, and their manner of speaking: for to speak many words, tho' they are good, is often a great fault in a Maid.* The fifth is to consider, before whom one speaks: for Respect must be had to wise and ancient men, neither must one speak in their presence, but when it is necessary, or that one cannot be excus'd from it. The sixth is to consider the Place, in which one speaks: for there are some places, where one may speak; and there are others, where one must be silent, as in the Church, or other places, where one is oblig'd to behave himself with Respect. The seventh is to examine the Time: for, as the Wise man says, *There is a Time to keep silence, and a Time to speak.* And herein is Prudence as remarkable, as in any thing else whatever; especially, when there is an intent of rebuking, exhorting, or counselling any one: for 'tis good in all things to take a fit and proper time, especially in those, where, for want of considering this Circumstance, one runs the hazard of speaking unprofitably, and reaping no fruit from ones words. And this it is, that made the Wise man say: that *a Word, spoken fully, and in proper time, is like apples of Gold on pillars of Silver.*

Prov. 25.
v. 11.

You ought therefore exactly to weigh all these Circumstances, if you design to keep your Tongue innocent: for in what manner soever you transgress these Rules, you offend, and since 'tis very difficult not to infringe some of them, when one speaks, the securest way for avoiding these Shelves and Rocks, is to shelter your selves in the Haven, that is, to continue in silence,

§. 6.

Having thus regulated and mortify'd your Tongue, there remains yet a more important step for you to make: You must proceed to the Mortification of your own Will, which is another Key of good Life: and there is nothing so available for the attaining to it, as the submitting your selves to the Laws of Obedience. Highly esteem this Vertue, and take pleasure to exercise your selves in it: for you cannot offer to G O D a more agreeable Sacrifice than the destruction of your own Mind and rebellious Will. Whatever thing you do thro' Obedience, how mean and low soever it is, G O D will raise it, and recompence it, as if it were very excellent; and on the contrary G O D will never approve any of your Actions, how eminent soever it appears, if it be repugnant to the Obedience, you ow to him, or to your Superiors. Whoever therefore you are, obey, and that with a free and chearful heart, those, who are over you: honor them for the love of G O D: for tho' they are not perhaps worthy of Respect, if you regard their Person; yet they are because of their Office: obey even your Equals, and your Inferiors, in such things, as Prudence and Decency will permit. Be very glad to be reprehended, or taught by another, whoever he may be: and if you are too severely rebuk'd, let your defence be humble, if you think fit to make use of any, tho' it may be better for you on such occasions, in imitation of your Saviour, to suffer, and be silent, unless your silence may cause any notable scandal. *Submit your selves* 1 Pet. 2. v. 13.

selves humbly to every Creature for GOD's sake. And when you shall receive from him extraordinary Favors and Consolations, take heed of being puff'd up by them, or esteeming your selves the better for this reason: for indeed whatsoever good you have, comes from GOD, and whatsoever is faulty and sinful in you, is from your selves.

§. 7.

Learn also to suffer without murmuring and complaining of the Injuries, Contempts, Calumnies, Afflictions, and Losses, which Almighty GOD shall permit you to undergo: believing, as 'tis undoubtedly true, that these Evils befall you thro' his ever-just and ever-merciful Providence: conceive no indignation or hatred against those, by whom they are inflicted on you; but on the contrary, according to your Masters example, shew your self gentle and courteous towards them.

Judge not of men, nor make estimation of them by their Body, in which you see nothing but miserable; but by the dignity of their Soul, created after the Image of GOD. Never shew an ill look to any one: be yet more careful never to appear angry, melancholy, or peevish; but on the contrary, in your Words, in your Conversation, when you answer any one, keep always with the gravity, which your Profession requires, sweetness and affability. Bear gently with other mens Faults; and as for such, as offend GOD's honor, procure with all possible care, either by your selves, or by others, that they may be corrected; but let this be always done with Sweet-

ness

ness and Charity, and when you shall know, that it may be profitably done: Hate sin in men, but hate not the men for the sins sake: for men are G O D's work, and sin is the work of Men. Be always ready to do good to all, even to those, who wish you ill, and have as much compassion for those, who do Evil, as for those who suffer it: but be particularly toucht for the Souls of the Faithful, which are tormented in Purgatory, and pray with great affection for them. To render your selves more sensible of others miseries, put your selves in the place of those, who bear them, and then you will feel them as your own. Envy no man, speak ill of no man, have a good opinion of every one; and if there arise any sinister suspicions in your heart, reject them immediately, for fear they take root in it. Despise no man, never despair of a sinners Conversion; for such an one, as you see to day a Criminal, may to morrow by G O D's Grace be chang'd. Have a firm purpose never to judge any one, and always interpret the words or actions of another in the best part, seeing and hearing all things with a sincere and charitable heart.

Trouble not your selves at the great Calamities you see happen in the World; but trust in G O D's providence, without which a Bird falls not to the ground. Boldly recommend your selves, and all things, that concern you, to the divine Providence, relying with an entire confidence in all your troubles on the Mercy of so good a Master: address your selves to him by fervent Prayers according to this Counsel of the Prophet: *Cast thy care upon our Lord, and he will* psal. 54.
nourish thee. And if it sometimes happens, that v. 22.
 you feel not any inward Consolation, and that
 your

your Heart is thereby cast down, grow not therefore slack in your Resolution, but redouble your Prayers, making them with abundance of Faith and Humility in our Lords presence ; and not seeking after vain Comforts to divert you : for he himself will comfort you. If the wicked Spirit inspires into you evil thoughts, which are sometimes horrible and abominable, make no account of them, but speedily shut the Eyes of your Soul against these infamous Objects : for you will more easily vanquish these Assaults by slighting them, than by employing much labor and diligence to combat them. Believe not, that you have been wounded by your Enemies darts ; if you have stoutly resisted , and repell'd them with speed : there befalls you nothing in this, which requires to be confess'd : for we are without doubt oblig'd to confess our sins, but not the temptations of sin, to which we give no consent. Unclean thoughts do not defile us, unless they delight us : for there is great difference between feeling the Evil, and consenting to it. And many great Saints have sometimes experimented in their flesh very troublesome and violent motions to sin ; but having oppos'd them with their Reason and their Will, they have serv'd only to gain them new Crowns.

§. 8.

Do not imagin, that Holiness consists in receiving great Comforts, and great Sweetnesses : nor that those tender Sentiments, which sometimes produce fountains of Tears, are certain signs of a true Devotion. These Marks are so
deceitful,

deceifful, that Hereticks and Pagans have often felt this kind of Transports. True Devotion is a fervent Readiness, refiding in the Will, to do always, what is pleasing to G O D, and what regards his Honor and Service: It produces always advantageous Fruits, tho the Spirit remains dry, and the Heart wholly barren. To be spiritual therefore, desire not with too much eagerness these inward delights; but be equally ready either to receive them, or be depriv'd of them, as it shall seem best to Almighty G O D. If he is pleas'd to comfort you, accept this Favor with an humble acknowledgment: take heed of using this Present for your own sole satisfaction, and being so taken with the Gift, you have receiv'd, as to forget him, who gave it: continue as humble, and as quiet, when you are visited, as when you are not, and place not your security and repose so much in the Gifts of G O D, as in G O D himself, who is the giver of them, and your last End. If any Grace is bestow'd on you, how small soever it be, believe, that you are unworthy of it, and that you deserve only Pains and Afflictions, and not Caresses. If in praying to Almighty G O D, or singing his Praises, you cannot be so attentive, as you would, lose therefore neither your Courage, nor your Confidence: for tho your mind may be distracted, your Prayers will not cease to be pleasing to G O D, if you consent not to this distraction, and if you do on your part, all you can; if with a good heart you offer to G O D your Will, such as it is, and persevere with care and simplicity in Prayer. Be not then impatient, nor excessively trouble, or afflict your selves; but after you have done your utmost endeavor, yield your selves up wholly to
to

to GOD: for he is so good, that he bears with those, who, speaking to him in Prayer, let sometimes things, unworthy of his presence, enter into their thought. Say to him on these occasions: Lord, thou seest, how my Heart slips from me, and how it is unhappily distracted in divers places. Have pity on me, who am a poor sinner. Good JESUS, answer for me, and supply my defects. I stagger at every step by reason of my weakness, give me thy hand, for fear I fall. But, O my GOD, what thanks ought I not to render to thy goodness, that falling so often, because I am weak and sick, thou art still my Protector and Support?

Dispose your selves to receive often the holy Communion, for to glorify GOD: and if it is not granted you in effect, as often as you would desire it, let not this disquiet you; but be contented to approach it with Heart and Will: for none can hinder you from coming to our Lord in this manner, and enjoying him, if you are so minded, a thousand times a day.

§. 9.

At night, before you go to bed, seriously recollect your self, and take a very strict account of all things, in which you have employ'd that day: after this, betaking your self to your Bed, settle your Body in an honest and decent posture: endeavor, as much as you can, that sleep may come upon you, whilst you are thinking on GOD: strive to be in such manner possess'd of him, and the Sentiments of his Love, at your falling asleep, that you may still be quite full of them, when
you

you shall awake. As soon as you shall have open'd your Eyes, let your Heart be lifted up to G O D, give him your first thoughts and words, saying with the Prophet, O G O D my G O D, *to* Psalm 62. v. 1.
thee do I awake from the dawning of the day: or as he says a little after: *In the morning will I meditate on thee, because thou hast been my Helper.* v. 7, 8. In this manner ought you to prepare your self for receiving the Spirit of Grace and Devotion, which in a Christian should never be interrupted. But if you are not as quiet and free, as you would be to apply your self to G O D, or if any filthy dreams have troubled you, during your sleep, be not therefore extraordinarily afflicted; but on the contrary make good use of it, and, as soon as your Reason shall have got the mastery, abhor these infamous Illusions, humble your self, and suffer with patience the disquiet, they have given you.

Take all manner of care to avoid not only great sins, but even the least negligence: for if you are not resolv'd to abstain from every thing, that may be displeasing to G O D, or diminish his love, you will never arrive either at perfect Purity, or Peace of Heart: This kind of defects will perhaps appear light to you, but they will become great, if you neglect them: and there is no Enemy so little, but may become dangerous, when he is contemn'd. Wherefore Saint Gregory said very well: *'Tis sometimes more dangerous to fall into small Faults, than into great ones: for greater sins, being so evident, that they strike the Senses, and often the Heart, are more easily amended; but the other, being less known, less care is taken to shun them, and so in time they cause many Disorders.* I say not this, that you should lose your Confidence

dence for having fallen into some sin of that nature, nor that you ought to fly from G O D's presence ; but on the contrary return to him humbly and with affection, speak to him with sorrow of the Evil, you have committed, accuse your ingratitude, and weep tenderly before him for having offended so good a Master. Fasten not your Eyes only on the greatness of your Misery ; but consider also the immensity of his Mercy, which cannot fail those, who return to him with all their Heart: and for to enter again intirely into his Favor, offer to the eternal Father in satisfaction for your sins the life, and death of his only Son, and beg of this Son, that he will wash your stains in the Bloud, he has shed for you. After this hope in G O D, and continue to serve him with the same Courage, and the same Heart, you had, before you fell into sin.

Take heed, you be not discourag'd, or grow faint-hearted, because you perceive in you some defects, or some Passions, which you cannot with all your industry totally subdue: recommend them to the divine Mercy, and without ever losing hope, suffer this condition humbly and patiently, persevere in Good, and put your selves into the hands of Almighty G O D. If you fall an hundred times a day, rise again as often in hopes, he will pardon you, and resolve every moment to be more attentive and more vigilant over your Actions. Confide not however in your selves, nor in your own strength ; but in the sole goodness of GOD, who never fails those, that do on their side, what they can. Let all the Affections of your Soul be so directed towards G O D, that he may be to you All in all things, that you may behold him alone in all things, and all things in him:

him: consider them not in themselves, nor for what they are, make them not the Object of your delight; but respect them all in G O D, considering the best and most important qualification, they have; which is, that they proceed from him, and represent something of himself: and thus the joy and satisfaction, they shall give you, will not be only more pure, but also far sweeter and much greater. Recommend all your Works, and all your Exercises to the divine Wisdom, to the end it may direct them, and perfect them: offer them to your Saviour, and his eternal Father, as being united and incorporated with the Life and Actions of his Son; for the Glory of his Church, and for the salvation of all the Believers, of which it is composed. By this means all your Works and Exercises will become holy, and infinitely pleasing to Almighty G O D, thro' the ineffimable value of those of his dear Son; under the shadow of which they will pass for Good in G O D's sight, and whence they draw all their Grace. This is the Counsel given us by the holy Apostle St. Peter, when he invites us to offer to G O D the Sacrifices of good Works, that they may be acceptable to him by JESUS CHRIST, and Offer then to his Majesty all your Pains, great and little, Internal and external, with all the Labors, you undergo, from which the present life cannot be exempted, to the end that all your Actions, may draw their price and value from the Merits of the Blood and Passion of G O D's Son.

1 Pet. 2. v. 5.

Be not too hasty or too hot in the things, you undertake: be not over-much affected to them, so as to make your selves their Slaves; but always endeavor to preserve your selves in a true liberty: Even in matters of Vertue follow not the first motions of your Heart, if they have too much violence: consider all, consult Prudence and Judgment, to regulate your Affections; and consequently all the Actions, they are to produce. Trust not to what they appear at first, your intention may be good, they also may be good; but there is no Vertue, which is to be esteem'd a Vertue, if it be not accompany'd with Discretion, and the Love of GOD & of self without Discretion may be hurtful: Prudently remove from you, whatever may serve as an occasion to make you lose the Peace and Tranquillity of your Heart; and above all let your principal care be to banish from your Soul Wrath, Covetousness, vain Pleasures, Fear, excessive Love, Sorrow, Hatred, and all the other Passions, which might disturb its Quiet. Be no less careful to preserve your selves from indiscreet Scruples, and from all superfluous Thoughts, which may cause trouble to your mind: be not much disquieted at such Accidents, as may befall you in this life: since in effect all things in this World are transitory, and so all the losses, you can suffer, are as Payments anticipated for the next Life, and Favors of GOD for all Eternity. In fine entirely disengage your Mind, as well as your Affections, from the present World, which passes away almost in an

an instant; recollect all your Forces and all your Powers within your selves, and there continually communicate alone with Almighty G O D.

At all times and in all places consider his Presence with Respect: for at what time and in what place soever you are, he is never absent; but is all in all places. Speak to him with confidence, as to a Friend, whom you have near you, and fear not to discover to him your purposes, and the sentiments of your Soul. Accustom your selves to treat with him in private, and be assur'd, that this Familiarity, if I may be permitted so to speak, will be wonderfully beneficial to you. Lose neither Courage, nor Hope, for seeing your Heart so inconstant, and finding so much difficulty to master your Understanding, and fix it on G O D: persevere valiantly, 'tis an Horse got loose, chastise it in such manner, that it may be oblig'd to return to its Course: for after you shall have with a little trouble accustom'd it, 'twill not only be sweet and easy for you to think on G O D, and the things, that concern him; but you will scarce be able to pass an hour without so doing. But if you find your Soul sometimes distracted, make it return to its first Exercise, and say to it: Where hast thou been wandring, O my Soul? What advantage has accru'd to thee by being separated from thy Lord, having lost thy time, and unprofitably distracted thy Heart? Be no longer a Vagabond: since there is nothing, that so much misbecomes the Spouse of the heavenly King.

Set also often before your Eyes the Image of JESUS CHRIST, G O D and Man, nail'd on the Cross, and print it as deep, as possibly you can, in the bottom of your Heart. Reverence

A a 2

with

with a sincere Devotion his holy Wounds, which deserve, that you should render them eternal Homage: hide your selves in them with an holy Confidence, accompany'd with Humility. If you employ all your Senses in this lively Representation of your Saviours Torments, there will be no room left for other Figures, and strange Imaginations: and as one Nail drives out another, all other vain Thoughts will fly away from before the presence of this. Dwell then, as much as you can, with your selves, treat with your selves, disentangle your Heart, and remove from it all transitory things: look stedfastly on your GOD, who always beholds you, have with him sweet and amorous Entertainments, let your Heart speak to him, let your Voice sometimes express your love to him, and esteem it the greatest of all Losses to be separated one only moment from this Sovereign Good, in which all other good things are included.

CHAP. V.

Of a Christians most essential Obligations towards GOD, towards himself, and towards his Neighbor.

HAVING spoken of the Vertues in general, we adde this Chapter, to treat of them more particularly; and we shall apply, what has been hitherto said, to the principal Obligations of a *Christian*, which are to acquit himself of what he owes to GOD, to himself, and

to his Neighbors. The Prophet *Micha* plac'd the sum of all Vertues in these three parts of Justice, when he said: *I will declare unto thee, O man, wherein Goodness consisteth, and what our Lord requireth of thee, to do Judgment, to love Mercy, and to walk carefully with thy G O D.* For the first of these Instructions, which is to judge equitably, particularly respects our selves; the second, to love Mercy, regards our Neighbor; and the third, to be careful to please G O D, pertains to his Worship, and the Respect, that is due to him.

§. I.

To begin with the strictest, and most important of these Obligations, you shall observe, that, as amongst precious Stones there are some, which their kind alone renders much more estimable than others, as Rubies, Diamonds, and Emeraulds, so amongst Vertues there are some which of their own nature, incomparably exceed the rest. These are they, which respect G O D, and are for this reason call'd *Theological*, to which we may also adde the Fear of G O D, Religion, the Property whereof is to honor this sublime Majesty, and whatever concerns the divine Worship and Service. These are the first and most necessary, and it may be said, that they are not only the first and most considerable; but that they are also those, which stir up the others, and give them life and motion. They are in respect of the other Vertues, what the Heavens are in respect of the inferior Creatures, which depend on their Influences and their Courses. If you design then

to attain to Perfection, endeavor to possess them all universally, if you can: for as to make a Lute render pleasing Musick, all its Strings must be perfectly in tune, and every one do its Office: so to form the Life of a perfect *Christian*, all the Vertues must contribute and agree together: but you must particularly cultivate these, and advance in them, because they are the term of Perfection; and you will be so much the more perfect, as you shall have made greater progress in them. 'Twas hereby, I believe, that many of the holy Patriarchs were so signal in Vertue: for tho' they were rich and marry'd, and tho' the consideration of their Families and Estates engag'd them in many Cares and temporal Affairs, they ceas'd not nevertheless to be very great Saints, because they possess'd these high Vertues in perfection; and there is nothing more illustrious in their Lives, than their exercising themselves in them, as appears in the Faith and Obedience of *Abraham*; in the Love, in the Devotion, in the Submission of *David*, and in the Confidence, this great King had in GOD; he sought no other Assistance, nor other Refuge in all his Troubles, he trusted only in him, as a true Child does in a good Father, and much more than so: since he said: *My Father and my Mother have forsaken me; but our Lord is careful for me.*

Psal. 103.
v. 10.

Now the securest and fittest means to acquire these excellent Vertues, is to believe, and print firmly in your minds, that GOD is truly your Father, and more than your Father: since there is no fatherly heart, that equals his; there is not any love of a Father, or care of a Mother, which comes near that, he has for you; and there is none but he, who has created you, and stores up
for

for you the greatest of all good things. Being thoroughly perswaded of this Truth, always look on him with the Eyes, and with the Heart of true Children, that is, with a loving Heart, a tender Heart, an humble and respectful Heart, an Heart obedient and entirely submitted to his holy Will, and in fine with an Heart full of Confidence amidst your Troubles, and which desires no other protection, but under the wings of his Prudence. You ought then to behold Almighty GOD with such Eyes, and with such an Heart, as often as you shall call him to mind, and you are oblig'd to call him to mind, as often as you can, that you may by little and little with the assistance of GOD's Grace form in your selves an Heart, dispos'd like that of the Prophet, who said: *Thy Name, O Lord, and the remembrance thereof, is all the desire of my Soul.* Iſai. 26. v. 8, 9. *My Soul desireth thee in the night, and in the morning with my Spirit and my Bowels I will seek thee.*

There are no words, capable to express, what this kind of Heart, and Affection towards GOD is; the forces of Nature are not alone sufficient to give it to us: He therefore only knows it, who has experimented it, and he only possesses it, who has been so happy, as to have receiv'd it. Wherefore you ought incessantly to beg this Favor, and not to lose the hopes of obtaining it, relying on these words of the Son of GOD: *If you, being evil, yet know, how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more will your heavenly Father, give a good Spirit to them, that shall ask him?* Luk. 11. v. 13. This is that Spirit, of which the Apostle speaks, when he says: *You have not again received the Spirit of Servitude in fear, but you have received the Spirit of Adoption of the Sons of GOD, which causeth*

Ezech. 26.
v. 26, 27.

Tract. de
vita spiritus
sanc.

that is to say, that your Inclinations are the same for GOD, as those, which Children have for their Father; that you love him, that you honor him, that you obey him; and that you have recourse to him in all your Necessities with the same Confidence, as Children have in their true Father. This is that Heart, which our Lord promises you by the mouth of the Prophet Ezechiel in these words: I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new Spirit in the midst of you, and I will take away from you your stony heart, and I will give you an heart of flesh; and I will put my Spirit in the midst among you, and will provide, that you shall walk in my Commandments, and keep my Judgments, and put them in practice. In fine 'tis this Spirit of Children, which all the Prophets have so often and so unanimously promis'd you in their Writings by the Merits of the only Son of GOD, and which was particularly given to the Faithful on the day of Pentecost, and which was afterwards spread over all the Church. And to descend more into particulars, if this Spirit reigns in you, and if GOD has given you this heart, of which we speak, these dispositions will appear by the effects, of which the principal, and those, the procuring of which you ought with greatest care to endeavor, are, as says St. Vincentius *Lirinensis*, a most fervent Love, an extream Fear, a great Respect, a most constant Zeal, a continual giving of Thanks, a Praise-sounding Voice, a ready Obedience, and an interior Joy, which makes you seek GOD, and find nothing sweet or agreeable but him. To obtain these holy dispositions, pray without intermission, and say to our Lord: O good JESUS, grant, that I may love thee most fervently,

fervently; and with all the powers of my Soul; let me infinitely honor, and fear thee, let me have so much zeal for the Glory of thy holy Name, and in such manner seek to advance it, that the least injury, offer'd to thee, may burn and pierce my heart; let me with very great humility acknowledge thy Benefits, and incessantly give thee thanks for them, as I ought; let me continually praise thee, spending days and nights in this Exercise, and saying to thee with all my heart, as did thy Prophet: *I will bless our Lord at all times: Psa. 33. v. 2.* his Praise shall be perpetually in my mouth. Grant me also this Grace, that, perfectly obeying thee, I may taste, how sweet thou art, to the end I may increase more and more in thy Love, and keep thy Commandments with more faithfulness.

§. 2.

These Affections and these Vertues directly regard Almighty GOD: but the same Saint requires also some others, which more immediately respect our selves, and reduces them to the number of seven. And first he would, that a true Child of GOD should be always full of an holy confusion for his sins: secondly, that he should be sorry for them, and bewail them all his life, because they have offended GOD, and polluted his Soul: thirdly, that in respect of his being a sinner he desire to be despis'd, forgotten, and forsaken of all the World, believing himself unworthy to be regarded of men, or receive the least favor from them: fourthly, that he consider his Body, as the Source of his sins, and that for this reason he mortify it, and treat it with all

all the Rigor, it deserves: fifthly, that he conceive an irreconcilable Hatred against all his vicious Inclinations, and that he labor without ceasing not only to cut off the Branches of them, but also to pluck up totally their Roots: sixthly, that with extraordinary diligence, and exact faithfulness, he endeavor, that in all his Actions, in his Words, in his Senses, and in all the motions of his Soul, there may not any thing be found, contradictory to Justice, or which may in the least withdraw him from the Law and Commandments of Almighty G O D: And seventhly, that Modesty and Prudence appear in all his Conduct, so that there be nothing either superfluous or defective seen in it.

§. 3.

This great Saint adds also in the same place seven other Dispositions, which are no less necessary than the first, and are to be exercis'd towards our Neighbor. First, to have a true compassion of other mens Miseries, resenting them, as if they were our own: secondly, to rejoyce sincerely at their Prosperity, as we would do at any Happiness, that should befall our selves: thirdly, to bear with quietness and patience the Injuries, which are done us, and to pardon them with all our heart: fourthly, to treat every one with abundance of sweetness: and that this sweetness appear not only in our Behaviour and Discourses, but that our whole Soul be fill'd with it, that it may be imparted to our Neighbor, as occasion shall require: fifthly, to shew respect towards all sorts of Persons, to behold none without esteeming them

them more considerable, and better than our selves, and to subject our selves to all men, as if they were indeed our Lords: sixthly, to keep perfect Peace and perfect Union with all men, so that on our part, and as far as we can with G O D's good pleasure, we may think and say the same thing with all, perswading our selves, that among *Christians* there is nothing separate, that they are all one and the same thing, and that therefore there ought to be but one and the same Sentiment, and one and the same Will between us and others: seventhly, to be in a sincere disposition after the Example of J E S U S C H R I S T, to offer our selves for all men, that is, to be always prepar'd to expose our Lives for the Salvation of all, to pray day and night to Almighty G O D for all, and to endeavor continually, that all may be one only thing in J E S U S C H R I S T, and J E S U S C H R I S T in them. But think not, that you are thereby less oblig'd to shun the company of the Wicked; on the contrary you ought to know, that if there are any, whose Conversation has been to you an occasion of sin, who have given any hindrance to your Spiritual Advancement, or who have been the cause, that the Fervor of Charity has decreas'd in your Soul, you ought to fly from them, as from Serpents. There is no Coal, how thoroughly lighted soever, which is not quencht by being put into water; and there is none, which is so quencht, but that it will kindle again, if you mix it with others, which are burning. Avoid then dangerous occasions: but when there shall be no cause to fear them, converse simply with your Neighbor; examin not too exactly his defects; if they are so visible, that they cannot be conceal'd,

conceal'd, either suffer them with Patience, or reprehend them with Charity, when you shall judge, that your Admonitions may be profitable.

But because Charity and Mercy towards our Neighbor is the Root and Foundation of all these Vertues, 'tis this, you ought most to esteem, if you desire to please Almighty GOD: since there is none, which he so often and so earnestly recommends in all the Scripture. The Prophet Zachary relates, that the Jews asking GOD, whether, to please him, and fulfil his Law, they ought to fast certain days in the year, GOD, to let them know, what Works were most pleasing to him, answer'd them in this manner:

Zach. 7. v. 9,
10.

Take care to execute true Justice, and Mercy, and deal mercifully every one of you with his Brother. Injure not the Widow, Orphan, Stranger, and poor man. Let none of you meditate any Evil in his heart against his Brother: If you live in this manner, you will be pleasing to me, and accomplish my Law. These are very express words, which proceeded out of our Lords mouth: but he extols this yet much higher, when he says in *Isaiab*:

Isai. 23. v. 12.

This is my Rest, that ye comfort and refresh the Afflicted. For, could GOD more exalt the Works of Mercy, than by putting himself in the place of the Poor, and taking for his own the Refreshing and Assistance, which is given the Miserable? But above all I cannot sufficiently admire, what I have read in *Ezechiel*, where GOD, with his own mouth relating the sins, which had cast the Town of *Sodom* into the extremity of all Miseries, reduces them to five in these terrible words: *This was the Iniquity of thy Sister Sodom, Pride, Satiety of Bread, Abundance, Idleness,*

Ezech. 16.
v. 49.

ness, and that they would not stretch out their hands to succor the poor and needy persons. What ought you then to think of this Vice, and how odious in the sight of GOD is hard-heartedness towards the poor, since he places it as the last step, by which this People ascended to the greatest of all Abominations? How strange is the Blindness of Christians, to make themselves Imitators of Sodom, to employ all their Cares for the heaping up of Treasures, and to place their sovereign Felicity in abundance? You have hitherto heard the Law of the Prophets: the Gospel, which is the Law of Love, speaks no other Language; and can any thing greater be said in favor of Mercy, than what the Son of GOD himself taught us, when he said, that the Sentence, which shall be pronounc'd at the last Judgment, shall be grounded only on the having exercis'd or neglected the Works of Charity? Is there any thing, that can make us more esteem this Vertue, than these following words: *What you have done to the least of these, ye have done it to me?* And do we not see, that our Saviour has plac'd the whole Accomplishment of the Law and the Prophets in the only Precept of loving GOD and our Neighbor? In fine JESUS CHRIST, being ready to depart out of this World, recommended nothing so expressly to his Disciples in that great Sermon, he made to them after his last Supper, as to preserve Charity, and to bear love to their Brethren. *This is my Commandment*, says our Lord, *that ye love one another, as I have loved you.* And a little before he said: *By this shall every one know, that ye are my Disciples, if you have love one to another.* Nor is his Heart contented with

Mat. 25.
v. 40.

Joh. 15. v. 12.

Joh. 13. v. 35.

Joh. 17. v. 22,
& 23.

with only giving them this last Commandment, but turning immediatly towards his Father, he addressees to him a fervent Prayer, that he would imprint this Precept in their Minds, and that the Accomplishment of the Law might be manifested in their perfect Charity: *Holy Father, says the Son of G O D, I pray, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee, that the World may believe, that thou hast sent me;* both to let every one know, that the Charity of *Christians* towards one another ought to be so perfect, and so far above whatsoever can be expected from Flesh and Blood, that there should be no need of any more powerful Argument for the convincing of Unbelievers; and to make them believe, that 'twas impossible, they, who lov'd one another with so fervent and so disinterested a Love, could be any other than heavenly men.

You see then what the Charity should be you ought to have for your Neighbor, and with what Affection you are oblig'd to bear with him in his defects, and relieve him in his Necessities. But you must observe, that for the making an holy use of all the things, I have hitherto propos'd to you, there is nothing so necessary, as to watch continually over your selves with fear and trembling, and to dread nothing so much, as the falling short of your fidelity to G O D in the good Resolutions, you shall have taken for the government of your life. This holy Vigilance, and this Care will serve you as a quickning Spur, to keep you from ever falling asleep in the way of Vertue: and you ought never to lose them, even in the midst of your Employments and Affairs: since this saving
Fear,

Fear, and this exact Care never to do the least thing, which may be displeasing to Almighty GOD, is, according to the Prophet, the third part of Justice.

These then are the principal Vertues, which imbellish this heavenly Life, these are the Flowers of this Paradise, the Stars of this Heaven, and the Image whereof we have spoken to you, renew'd and reform'd after the Resemblance of JESUS CHRIST: for the Life of a Christian ought to be so perfect, that it should be a Pattern of Holiness, a dumb Sermon, a Light to the World, an evident Proof of the true Faith, and a Mirror, in which GOD's Glory may be more clearly seen to shine, than in all the other Creatures, as the Prophet excellently well signifies by these words: *The righteous and the just shall be called Trees, which our Lord has planted, that he might be glorified in them.*

Isai. 61. v. 3.

CHAP.

Heart, and this exact Care never to do the least thing which may be displeasing to Almighty GOD: according to the proper part of Justice.

These three the principal Virtues, which imbeddeth this heavenly Life, these are the

Twelve principal things, which they ought to do, who desire to serve Almighty GOD.

1. *For the Life of JESUS CHRIST:*

Since I know, that several Persons desire to have always before their Eyes the principal Points of the Spiritual Life: I will endeavour to present before you the most important and most essential things, which you both ought to do; and ought to study to the end, that the Almighty may favour you in his Land and Church, in which you may, as the Jew behold your most particular Obligations.

And to begin with those, which you ought to do: The first is, that you endeavor to continue always in GOD's presence by an actual Application: but if this cannot be without intermission, at least both day and night often lift up your Heart to him by fervent Aspirations, by short, but humble and affectionate Prayers, and beg of him his Love and his Grace, as being able to do nothing without him.

The second is, that as the Bee seeks amongst the Flowers only some Juice to carry into her Hive: so you in all things, that shall come before you, in all your Conversations and in all your Readings, should always endeavor to collect some pious and devout Considerations, of which you may compose the Honey of divine Love. And as Fire consumes, and converts into its

its own nature, whatever is put into it, even what is most contrary thereunto, as Water, or most hard, as Iron: so let your Heart be in such manner inflam'd with this Love, that all things in the World, of what quality soever they be, may only serve for matter to augment its heat.

The third is, that, if you fall into any faults, or perceive your strength weakned or dissipated, you do not lose your Courage, nor suffer your selves to sink under Temptations; but rather turn humbly towards our Lord, acknowledge before him your Misery and his Mercy, do on your part, whatsoever shall be in your power, to return to your first state, and follow courageously, what you had begun.

The fourth is, that, in whatsoever you shall do, you bring always a great Purity of Intention; which obliges you to examin attentively all your Words, your Actions, and even your Thoughts, and to mark the Intention, they may have: endeavor to rectify it, and encline it continually towards G O D, referring to his Glory, whatever shall proceed from you, and offering your'selves to his Majesty, not only once every day, but as often as you shall begin anything.

The fifth is, that even in the time of Peace and Tranquillity you be always prepar'd to receive humbly all the Storms, which may rise up against you. It seldom happens, that Wrath and Hastiness are any way useful: but 'tis more extraordinary for them to produce ought, that is good: they leave at least the Conscience always full of scruples, and 'tis difficult to judge, whether one has exceeded in them or not: 'Tis therefore one of the Passions, you may most

easily be without, and if you endeavor to surmount it, you shall live with much Repose.

The sixth is, that, if you are not a Prelat, or the Father of a Family, you always turn your Eyes from the Imperfections of others, and cast them on your own: for the first ordinarily draws after it Pride, Wrath, rash Judgment, indiscreet Zeal, and divers other Motions, which trouble the quiet of the Heart and Conscience; but the second ordinarily produces in Souls only Humility, Self-Confusion, and the Fear of GOD.

The seventh is, that you disengage your selves from all the transitory things of this World, not only as to your Soul, but also as to your Body; and that you apply your selves to GOD with all your Heart: for the more you shall advance in this Disposition, the less you will have of Man, and the more you will participate of GOD: for such Souls, as are extraordinarily affected to perishable things, change and pass with them; but such, as love GOD alone, do in their degree participate of the Firmness and Stability of GOD. Withdraw your selves also from the multiplicity of Affairs: for tho' they are not evil, yet if you are too much addicted to them, they will throw your Heart into distraction, and never suffer it to rest perfectly in GOD.

The eighth is, that you continually fix your Eyes on the Life of JESUS CHRIST, on his Passion, Doctrine, Conversation with men, and those divine Examples, he has left us of all Vertues, of Humility, Charity, Mercy, Obedience, Poverty, Austerity, Contempt of the World, and on the extream Love, he had for our Salvation.

The

The ninth is, that you labor, as much as possibly you can, to deny your selves, resign your selves up wholly to Almighty GOD in such manner, that you may cause your own Will to dy, and that the Will of GOD alone may live in you. 'Tis thus, he reigns in us, and we in him. This is the most useful of all the Resolutions, you can take in the Rancounters of this Life, prosperous or adverse, sorrowful or pleasing, sweet or bitter, such as it shall please GOD to send you.

The tenth is, that in all your Business, Cares, and Troubles you have recourse to GOD with Humility and Confidence. He is your Father, and there is no Father, either so powerful, or so merciful, as he: Seek him with the Heart of a true Child: remit all things to his Providence: take them, as coming from his hand: drive from you all discontented Thoughts, and cast your selves without fear into his Arms.

The eleventh is, that you be in a perpetual acknowledgment of his Benefits, and that you give him continual Thanks for his Favors, whether great, or small, not considering so much the quality of the Gifts, he shall have bestow'd on you, as your own Unworthiness, the Greatness of him, who grants them, and the Love, with which he treats you: for in effect he gives little things with no less love, than the more important.

The twelfth is, that you take a firm Resolution to cut off and remove far from you all such things, whether corporal, or spiritual, as may put the least Obstacle to your Advancement: as the too great love of some Persons, your Studies, Books, Conversations, and Acquaintances,

tho they appear to you spiritual; principally, when you shall perceive, that you adhere too much to them, and that they hinder you from making a greater progress in Vertue.

CHAP. VII.

Twelve sorts of Defects, which ought carefully to be avoided in the Spiritual Life.

THere are several Defects, which hinder one from going forward in the Spiritual Life, and cause many of those, who had a design to profit, to be found after several years the same, they ever were. We will here shew you twelve of the most important, that beholding your selves in them, as in a Glass, you may thereby observe your Stains, know the Causes, that hinder your Progress, and seek Remedies for them.

The first is the excessive Love of Business, and outward Affairs, which causes one to be depriv'd of the inward Visits and Consolations of the Spirit: for no person can find without, what he ought to seek within himself.

The second is the too easy Access, which one gives to every Body. Those, who are naturally addicted to this easiness, and take delight in it, cannot rid themselves of Company, and Business,

Business, when it is necessary: thus they lose their time, and often fail in their good Exercises, because they will not fail their Friends; and thro' over-much desire to please the Creatures, the Creator is often displeas'd.

The third is, not to be humble enough before GOD, and to act in his presence with too much liberty: thereby is lost that respectful Reservedness, that is due to him, and which is the Daughter of true Humility, and the Mother of Spiritual Profit.

The fourth is, to apply ones self to things inconsiderately, and with too much eagerness, to follow therein rather the impetuous Passion of the Mind, than the Conduct of Reason: this excessive Fervor destroys the Peace and Tranquillity of Heart; 'tis also prejudicial to the Affairs themselves, for want of giving them due Consideration. There is nothing more true than the Assertion of the Wise man, who says: *He, Prov. 19. v. 21*
who hasteneth with his feet, will fall. Endeavor therefore to act in all things with a sound and quiet Judgment, which may be call'd the faithful Companion of Prudence.

The fifth, into which one sometimes falls without perceiving it, is to presume too much of ones self, and ones own Vertue. This is the Vice of the *Pharisee*, who thro' the too good Opinion, he had of his own Merits, contemn'd others, and thereby found himself to want the Foundation of all Vertues, which is Humility.

The

The sixth is, to be inclin'd to judge evil of ones Neighbor, and lightly to condemn his Actions. There is nothing, that more chills Charity: since the Good, we wish another, proceeds partly from the good Opinion, we have of him.

The seventh is, to have the greatest part of ones Heart always set on worldly things. This causes the divine Love to retire from us, and be much less liberal of its Influences.

The eighth is, to behave ones self coldly in the Exercise of Prayer, as many do, who come to it with sloth, continue it weakly, and finish it without Profit: which being so, 'tis no wonder, if they find themselves depriv'd of heavenly Visitations, and if their Devotion is feeble and languishing.

The ninth is, to be over-indulgent to ones self, and very slack in what concerns the Mortification and Destruction of the outward Man: He, who lives for himself, will hardly live for GOD; and he, who endeavors not daily to mortify himself, will never be transform'd into GOD.

The tenth is, not to give ones self sufficiently to Recollection; but to be found ordinarily distracted and wandering out of ones self: whence a Man comes to be ignorant of what he is, and knows not how to disesteem himself, as he ought, or to watch over his own Actions, as much as is necessary.

The

The eleventh is, to love ones self too much, to be too much bent to ones own Will and Appetites: they, that live thus, believe the Cross of **JESUS CHRIST** to be an intolerable Burden, and the Perfection of the Evangelical Life a Yoke, which cannot be born.

The twelfth is, to be changeable and unconstant in ones Purposes, to form and more easily break ones good Resolutions. 'Tis Perseverance alone, which finishes the work: without it the whole Life passes in vain and frivolous Projects, and a man becomes like those Vines, which bear Grapes all the year, but such, as never come to maturity.

F I N I S.
